The RED BOOK Magazine

VOL. XLIV, NO. 4 Published Monthly. On sale the 12th of each month preceding date of issue. FEBRUARY 1925



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R. M. PURVES, New England Representative, 90 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. LOMDON OFFICES, 6 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London, W. C. Entered as second-class matter April 25, 1995, at the post office at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879 Copyright, 1925, by THE CONSOLIDATED MAGAZINES CORPORATION (The Red Book Magazine)

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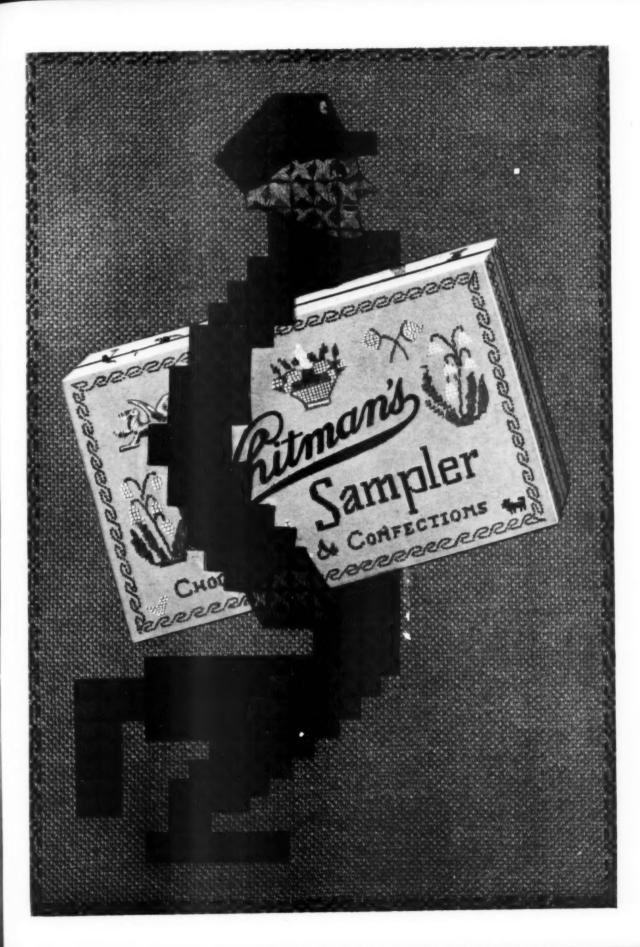
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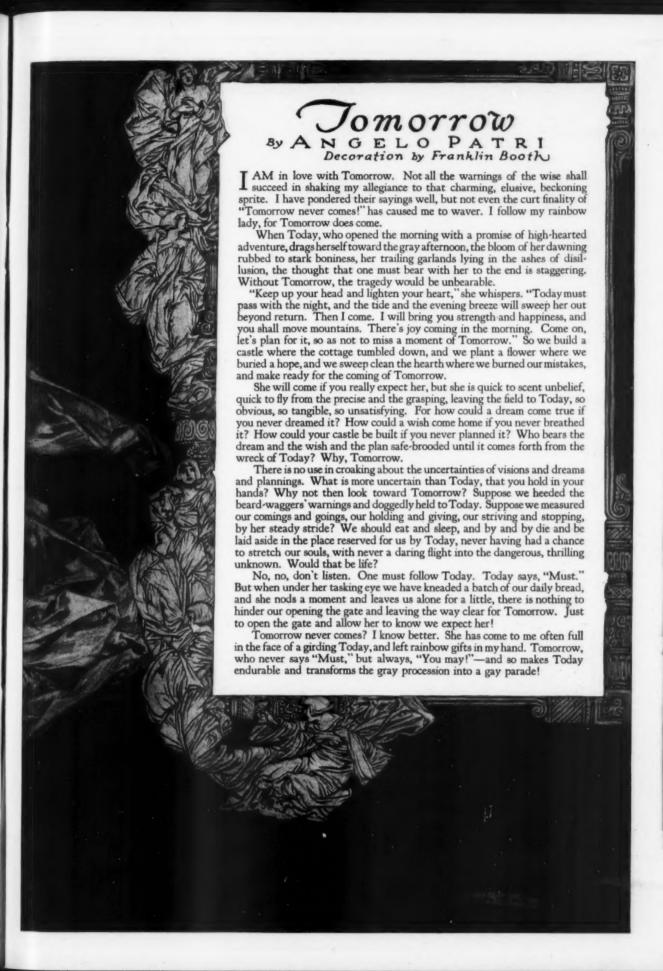


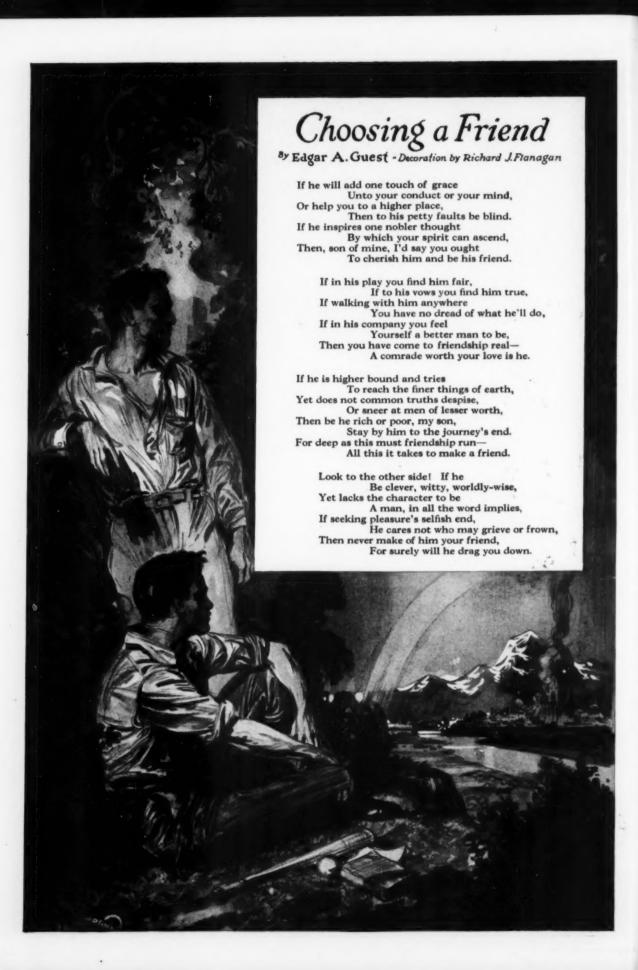














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BLÂNC — NATUREL — ROSE No.1 ROSE No.2 — RACHEL No.1 RACHEL No. 2 OCRE-ROSE





PERSONAL SERVICE BUREAU
Tor guidance in choosing the correct
Face Powder shade and expressive
perfume odeur to intensify individuality

714 Fifth Avenue New York

ADD STILL GREATER CHARM TO THE LOVELIEST FACES



"You would never guess they are married"

It is only of a clever wife that this is ever said. Why let youth slip away, youthful radiance fade, when to keep them you need but practice a few simple rules of daily care?

DEOPLE have changed, and ideals have changed. The "middle-aged" woman is conspicuously absent in the modern scheme of things.

In her place, we have the woman who values the social importance of youth—and keeps it. Glowing youth well into the thirties, even the forbidden forties, we see it today wherever our eyes turn!

Yet the secret is simple; and the means within the reach of everyone—first, last and foremost, correct skin care. The common-sense care that starts with keeping the pores open and healthy; just the regular use of palm and olive oils as scientifically saponified in

See the difference one week will bring

Use powder and rouge if you wish. But never leave them overnight. They clog the pores, often enlarge them. Blackheads and disfigurements often follow. They must be

Wash your face gently with soothing Palmolive. Then massage it softly into the

skin. Rinse thoroughly. Then repeat both washing and rinsing. If your skin is inclined to dryness, apply a touch of good cold cream—that is all. Do this regularly, and particularly in the evening.

The world's most simple beauty treatment

Thus, in a simple manner, millions since the days of Cleopatra have found beauty, charm and Youth Prolonged.

No medicaments are necessary. Just remove the day's accumulations of dirt and oil and perspiration, cleanse the pores, and Nature will be kind to you. Your skin will be of fine texture. Your color will be good. Wrinkles will not be your problem as the years advance.

Avoid this mistake

Do not use ordinary soaps in the treatment given above. Do not think any green soap, or represented as of palm and olive oils, is the same as Palmolive. The Palmolive habit will keep that schoolgirl complexion.

Palm and olive oils-nothing else-give nature's green color to Palmolive Soap.

Volume and efficiency produce 25c quality for only



THE PALMOLIVE COMPANY (Del. Corp.), Chicago, Ill.

A COMMON-SENSE EDITORIAL

By BRUCE BARTON

Relatives

MY feet were tired from standing up in the crowded train, and maybe that affected my eyesight. Anyhow, the folks in that car seemed to me woefully unattractive.

There were men with unshaven faces, and women with disheveled hair, and babies who put their dirty fingers in their dirty little mouths. Some sprawled and slept; some snored.

Our journey ended, and we were emptied into the depot.

There, behind a rope, awaiting our arrival, were more folks, as unattractive as ourselves.

But as we came pouring through the gates, behold a miracle! The homely horde rushed upon us. Cross-eyed men clasped unkempt women to their breasts. Withered old women planted kisses upon the cheeks of homely young women, exclaiming that they were "beautiful" and calling them "my dear," and weeping tears of happiness at their arrival.

Consecret consecret Male Man

And suddenly I was ashamed of myself; and I said to my wife: "What a magnificent thought it was, on the part of God, to give every human being somebody who thinks that he or she is wonderful."

Samuel Butler, who was very cynical, thought it a great mistake that the generations should overlap. He would have all of one generation pass away before any of the next were born—as with butterflies, for instance.

The butterfly spins a cocoon, puts into it enough food to carry the young one to maturity, then lies down and dies. So it would be fine, said Butler, if each one of us could be born wrapped in twenty thousand dollars, which would feed and clothe us to maturity—but with no parents, aunts, uncles or wise old friends to be a nuisance to us.

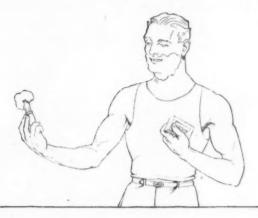
Napoleon is supposed to have had more energy and will-power than any other modern man, but even he could not solve the relative problem. It is amusing to read his angry letters to his brothers, and see what trouble he had in trying to teach them to be kings. They persisted in making a mess of things, and caused him more worry than all his armies.

So relatives are not an unmixed blessing; yet what a sad world without them! Every once in a while I go over to the Grand Central Station and see that welcoming scene repeated, and always it gives me a little thrill.

A hundred nondescript folks, from a hundred commonplace homes, waiting to welcome a hundred others. Yet by a certain divine astigmatism, each one of the hundred is supremely beautiful in the eyes of some one!

So long as he or she lives, there will be another who cares. Surely this is one of the splendors of life! And one of the great lines of literature is: "He setteth the solitary in families."

To wielders of the facial scythe



Otho Cushing

Gentlemen:



HIS advertisement is a forced move—a desperate gesture of defense. Out of charitable consideration for the Ivory cakes which

are already called upon to perform such a multiplicity of duties, we have hesitated to appoint them an unofficial reparations commission in the daily struggle of Brush and Blade vs. Skin and Stubble



But the hundreds of accusing letters from you men that have choked our mail bags during the past year compel us, in sheer self-justification, to address to you this public reply:

"Yes, we do know that you can get a grand shave with Ivory."



We contemplate the effect of this insidious announcement with apprehension. We see the millions of men who meet Ivory every morning in tub and washbowl each seize their beautiful white cakes with an exultant cry of sinister joy: "Aha! So you've been holding out

on me! All these years you've been idling on the job here, doing nothing but bathing me and my family, shampooing us, washing our faces and hands and clothes, and heaven knows what else, when you might have been helping me to shave! Now, darn you, get to work!"

Shaving with Ivory is already apparently a custom with countless men. One of them said recently: "I have tried about all the creams and soaps advertised; but not one of them, as a gift, could now find a place on the bathroom shelf so long as Old Reliable is obtainable."



Experts in the art tell us that with an average stubble, one need merely wet the face, rub Ivory on thick, and shave; while with a really tough crop, the best plan is to use Ivory like a shaving stick, lather well with the brush and then cleave through the foam like a cup-defender on the home tack. One thing is sure, your skin will never mourn its loss—Ivory is as soothing as a love-pat.

PROCTER & GAMBLE

IVORY SOAP

9944/100% PURE

IT FLOATS

WIVES who desire to preserve their own personal cakes of Ivory from the rigors of manhandling should have a private supply of Guest Ivory a convenient carton of twelve dainty

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The RED BOOK Magazine

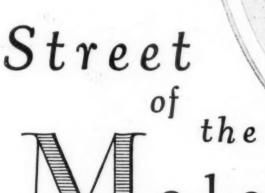
February 1925 . Volume xLiv . Number 4

KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN, Editor

EDGAR SISSON, Associate Editor

Cyril Hume

No other young American fictionwriter has ever made so instant an impression of distinction on critics here and abroad with a first novel as Cyril Hume did with "The Wife of the Centaur." He is not old enough to have written much, and this is one of his first short stories, written in Florence, where he is now living, and writing his second novel, the publication of which is eagerly awaited.



alcontents

Illustrated by Frederic R. Gruger

AN observant person experienced a feeling of disappointment on meeting Toddy Harrinton. At first one was apt to be pleased with the young fellow's fine shoulders and athletic bearing and heavily aquiline face, ruddy under cropped blond hair. But immediately, puzzling and troubling to the point of exasperation, came the contradictory reconsideration. Looking at him was like discovering that a pleasant landscape had no imaginative relief of water in it. It was annoying that a thing so fine could fall short of perfection. One rather held it against Toddy that there was too little back to his head, and that his cheerful eyes and mouth held so slight an indication of thought or resolution.

Toddy's father, Sir Harman George David Harrinton, Ninth Baronet of Tarnparson-in-the-Wood, was a man totally unequipped either to understand or to forgive Toddy's deficiencies. The eight preceding George Davids had bequeathed him no lack of back to his head, and he had acquired on his own account eyes of polished steel and a mouth like a dry sword-cut. Naturally he resented the cheerful shiftlessness of his son as an intended insult to the name of Harrinton, and when Toddy inevitably got himself into a conspicuously disgraceful mess, Sir George was predisposed to be merciless. The mess of course centered about a woman, which was deplorable, but in a Harrinton forgivable.



It concerned in addition, however, a sum of money and a slapped face, which was so outrageously unprecedented that it was only after a lengthy preliminary of asthmatic and almost apoplectic trumpeting that the Ninth Baronet of Tarnparson-in-the-Wood became articulate. His words, when they came, were heavy hearing to his disorganized offspring.

ing to his disorganized offspring.

"Well, Todhunter, my boy! You've got yourself into trouble for fair this time, haven't you? Now you want me to get you out of it. Well, here's my solution. Either you stay here and face the music,—I'll back you with my attorneys,—or you skip out of England and by gad, sir, you stay out of England!"

out of England, and by gad, sir, you stay out of England!"
Toddy preferred to skip. Music made up so largely of brass
and percussion would, he foresaw, be too much for ears used only

to chamber music.

S O he wandered over to Paris, inclined to treat the affair as a joke, a university escapade gone serious. From Paris he drifted down to Rome, honestly cheerful in the expectation that he would some day go home as the Tenth Baronet of Tarnparsonin-the-Wood when the affair in England had quieted down, and when his father and older brother had gone the vay of all fox-

hunting and brandy-drinking flesh.

Toddy found Paris refreshing and Rome stimulating—both congenial. He found also that the delights of these cities (of which he partook hungrily and light-heartedly after his fashion) were so costly that at the end of eight weeks his father's final gift of a thousand pounds had shriveled to some thirty. This disconcerted him not at all. Equipped with a tailored English wardrobe and an unfailing optimism, he drifted north again as far as Florence, where he found a position as salesman in a foreign shop. He was accepted by the most prominent if not the highest social group in Florence for the sake of his shoulders and the beautiful garments that covered them. So he remained.

It is alleged that Port Said and Aleppo are the two wickedest cities in the world. If this be true, then certainly those cities must be wicked beyond all imagining, for it is hard to dream of any city more tortuously evil than the beautiful depraved town of towers and lilies on the Arno. In Venice, when your gondola swims furtively like a rat by night down the oily water of a back canal, there is evil about you, and you feel that danger lurks waiting to prev upon your body. The gondolier may pause long enough in his singing to crush your skull with his great oar, and to rifle your pockets, and to slip your slack corpse over the side. But you know that when he is finished he will sing again, and pray for your soul, and your wandering body will some day find the deep quiet of the sea. In Venice the wickedness is physical. But in the black alleys of Florence, as you leave the feeble radiance of a single street-lamp, you feel that it is your spirit that the shadows are ready to demolish. Monstrous, ev l-minded cats cross your path or follow you, yowling with voices that crawl up your spine and creep about your scalp. You hurry down a slanting byway, and the echoes of your feet padding through fat litter or clattering upon broken paving-stones, pursue you ominously. You move beneath the toppling precipice of some ancient palazzo, and you hear music and shrill laughter, but you see never a chink of light through the window blinds. Glancing in at a faintly luminous doorway, you see a time-twisted hag sinfully mumbling her rosary. As you pass, she leers at you and nods.

There is something macabre and inhuman, too, about Florentine society as an outsider sees it: a crowd of Italianate English and Anglicized Italians, many of whom live in Florence only because it would be inconvenient for them to remain in other less liberal-minded cities. So they fret discontentedly among colossal Medici ghosts, combining the frivolity of the English with the immorality of the Tuscans. There are countless small factions in the great group, and each faction clings together in a protective mass, snubbing other factions which are theoretically less respectable.

During the lunch hour in Florence, one may see the young bucks, the foppish bearers of great names, the wasp-waisted officers, loitering on the pavement outside the three smart restaurants of the Via Tournabuoni. There they strut, drinking Ameri-

can cocktails, ogling women, calling after them.

Young Harrinton came instinctively to this society and was immediately accepted by it. He was a little surprised in the beginning at the social conventions of his new acquaintances. But in three weeks, so supple was his power of adaptation, he only smiled when he heard an Italian colonel seriously and courteously ask an English lady if she were with her husband or her lover.

In the presence of a few Anglo-Saxon friends, Toddy professed a contempt for the spindly, narrow-chested Florentines, and pre-

tended to laugh at their ways. But he liked the life and found Florentines congenial. In a month he was distinguishable from the cocktail crowd that impeded the sidewalks only by his yellow hair and his cheerful grin.

It was inevitable, considering Toddy's congenital amativeness and the circumstances in which he found himself, that he should sooner or later become involved with some sort of woman. It was to be expected, too, that he would waste no time about setting off in full cry upon a petticoat hunt. The unexpected entered

with the woman he chose for his attentions.

Toddy was the sort to be instinctively drawn to the obvious in femininity, something exuding female softness—in type, the lesser odalisque. That was the kind of young man Toddy was—at least, as far as anyone could foresee. So, naturally enough, when he plunged into a violently public affair with Ilaria, Marchesa di Mortedella da Bologna, not only Florence but Toddy

himself gawked in amazement.

The secret of this unpredictable alliance lay perhaps in the fact that it was not a thing altogether of Toddy's choosing. It was characteristic of Ilaria that she took the initiative in such an affair of the heart—characteristic, too, that she should carry it on with the coldly furious intensity of a she spider. Toddy was by no means her first conquest. Past amours had brought her into contact with numerous Italian gentlemen, ranging from a general in the army to a hotel porter, and including a middle-aged tenor. These transitory indiscretions Ilaria had conducted with a single-mindedness of purpose which had proved harassing to the unworthy objects of her affections. With depressing regularity they had deserted her, eluding her pursuit with an eagerness that suggested panic. But each successive disillusionment left Ilaria heart-free and hopeful, ready once more to tangle her tender spirit in the delicate meshes of just one other grand passion.

When the unsuspecting Toddy, like a lovely golden fish, swam into Ilaria's ken, she was no longer as young as she had been on that distant day when she had found her first and now forgotten beau ideal. And when Florence beheld her trammeling the loose but unsophisticated Toddy in her hungry affections, even cynical Florence clucked its tongue and wagged its head, and sighed:

"Poor boy!"

THE two met for the first time at a tea given by an English lady in the garden of her villa at San Domenico. Toddy had been invited. Ilaria had simply come. Having greeted her hostess with an effusiveness that failed signally to awaken any answering cordiality, she cast her liquid doelike eye over the assembled tea-drinkers for the means of conversation. Toddy, by reason of his coloring and physique, stood out from the rest, and so Ilaria appropriated him.

To say that Îlaria was attracted by the dynamic qualities of Toddy's intellect would be more than just to Toddy, and less than fair to Ilaria's custom or intentions. Knowing Ilaria, it is safe to assume that she liked the young Englishman for his youth and for the breadth and muscularity of his shoulders.

Toddy's part in the affair was involuntary though not unwilling from the first. It was necessary only for Ilaria to fix him with her liquid and suddenly feline eye, and to beckon to him. Toddy came and fetched her tea and sat in the garden chair next to her. Perhaps after all we must concede Toddy some volition in the preliminaries. Doubtless he was delighted to be seen conversing with a woman of such excellent family and execrable reputation. He was still youthfully simple-minded enough to enjoy the glamour of public depravity. Besides, Ilaria was well-enough looking and had money in her own right. After the preliminaries, however, it was impossible to suspect Toddy of deliberate action. Eyewitnesses assert that it was a case of sheer hypnotism, if not downright sorcery.

Ilaria's unwilling hostess later told me of the affair. "That woman," she said, referring to Ilaria, "sat there and—and talked to him. She talked. As soon as she had him helplessly seated, that bloodhound expression came into her face. I recognized it at once, you know. I always call it her bloodhound expression. She was like a cobra—in my garden chair. And I hadn't asked her, I'm sure. . . . She simply fascinated him. Poor Toddy just sat and listened with that appealing expression. He's such a boy! That appealing expression! You've seen it. With his mouth drooping open and his eyes hanging out on his cheeks—like a little frightened bird. And she talked to him. . . . No, I couldn't hear what she said."

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After some moments of conversation, Ilaria and Toddy had risen together and walked slowly about the garden under the yellow mimosa branches, for it was May. Finally they paused



"So!" she hissed. "I have found you-here!" "For God's sake, Ilaria," he said, "let's not make a scene!"

ander a rather fine cinquecento statue of Diana at the end of a yew alley. Here, at some distance from the tea-tables, but in full sight of everyone, they resumed their conversation. Rather, Ilaria did! Toddy simply listened, with floods of color sweeping up his cheeks and passing into his hair. She, Ilaria, faced him, leaning very close to him, talking with a fierce eagerness that shook her as a draft shakes a flame. She was too far from the company to be audible, but it was possible to see her geranium lips writhing like live things in her pale face. Her passionately vivacious hands, which were her chief beauty, flashed and fluttered no higher than her waist, like silver leaves in a breeze. Presently

Toddy, who had been looking down at her all the while, went brick red and made as though to grasp her hands. Quick as a cat she diverted his motion by taking his arm and leading him back toward the others. She guided him through the groups around the tea-tables, casting flippant good-by's left and right as she moved. Toddy's eyes were for her alone. . . . Ilaria led her prize through the company, and to the outraged fury of her hostess, popped him into her little roadster and drove him off.

Toddy and Ilaria were absent from Florence for about a week. On his return, Toddy gave his employer a doctor's certificate

stating that he had been confined with a fever during that time. But he and Ilaria were seen together on the beach at Viareggio by some one who, like them, had gone to enjoy the famous watering place out of season. Perhaps the Florentine physician had comprehensive theories

concerning fever. Their week upon the silver ribbon of sand between the tossing blue line of hills and the rolling blue line of waves was doubtless as idyllically delightful as even such a week can be. Not until later, when Ilaria had made his position as her cavaliere servente clear to the intrigued populace, did Tod-dy find the con-ventional leisure for repentance. Then it became plain that an insurmountable incompatibility existed between him and his lady.... Toddy's way of loving was the vagarious way of the lepidoptera. He preferred to flutter. He throve only upon variety, and was psychically crushed by the unremitting demands of fidelity.

Ilaria, on the other hand, was a woman for an affair in the heavy tragic manner of Helen, Cleopatra, Iseult or any of the better known demi-reps of antiquity. Her way was simply to take a passion by the throat and hang on with the punishing grip of a fighting bulldog until it was not only dead but a public nuisance. She was sublime; she was heroic; but she was too much for Toddy. His flickering light of love was a golden-hearted candle-flame. Ilaria's shone with the even corrosive brilliance of an oxyacety-

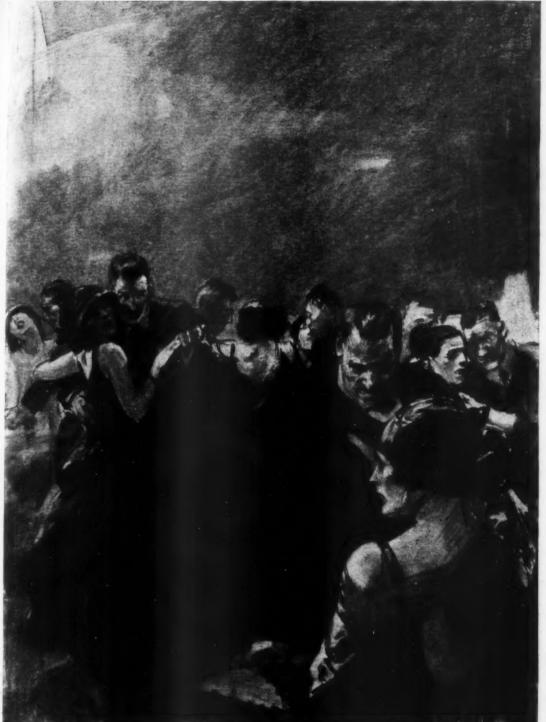
lene blow-torch.

Their fundamental incompatibility lay in the fact that Toddy took love as a pleasure, while to Ilaria it was a thing as engrossing as riding an outlaw cayuse, and twice as stimulating. Under the circumstances, nothing could have been more deplorable. For whereas matrimonial incompatibility—in our present enlightened



stage of civilization—may be obviated by a week-end in Paris and a subsequent payment of alimony, incompatibility in such a fundamental alliance as that in which Toddy found himself, is a more burning issue. It must be handled with a most delicate finesse—especially if only one party concerned is aware of it. A single mistake in tact or tactics may lead to public scenes, or even to gun-play. Where Ilaria was concerned, there was an impressively imminent probability of knife-play.

Toddy was a cautious youth, but he was desperately irked by the protracted strenuousness of his first Italian affair. Besides, Ilaria was not the only lady in Florence. Then too, she had an awkward way of being loving in public. "Toddy mio," she'd whisper, stroking his cheek, say, while they were having an ice in one of the street cafés of the Piazza Vittorio Emmanuele, "what



"You seem," said Toddy sulkily, "to enjoy this sort of thing." "Oh, I do!" she answered.

(she would agree)

their love was a flower too perfect to withstand the withering breath of publicity; the parched aridity of custom. This flower must (even at the cost of mutual anguish) be preserved in its primal loveliness and innocence. So he, Toddy, suggested that they part, sadly but wisely, before their love could wither from beauteous perfection, while the dew was still on the That was rose. the gist of Toddy's speech. The gist of Ilaria's was that if he ever spoke to her like that again, she would immediately employ her garter-knife to remove his heart. Then she showed him the garterknife; whereupon Toddy laughed and kissed her and told her not to be a silly little woman,

do I care if the worrrld sees I love you? Macche! Let us be open! We are not ashamed what everybody says!"

Such behavior and such doctrines outraged Toddy's British delicacy. Besides, he did not feel equal to the strain of loving Ilaria as she desired and deserved to be loved. At the end of a month he was frantic to be done with the whole affair.

He planned his parting speech with studious care, and delivered it in tones intended to convey almost insupportable emotion. Here is the gist of what he said: He, Toddy, was immeasurably and eternally grateful to her, Ilaria, for the perfect moments of exquisite happiness she had given him. He would, moreover, never cease to be grateful or to remember. In the treasure-house of his mind, enshrined among lesser recollections, the picture of Ilaria would always be the loveliest and most valued object. But for he was only fooling and he couldn't bear to leave her.

And then, perversely inopportune, further to complicate a complication, as is ever the way of the young trouble-maker, love swaggered in upon the scene and magically kissed poor Toddy on the mouth. Love, now many times reborn since her first sea-shell nativity, impudently virginal, red-headed, arrogant, alluringly brown-eyed, with a freckled impertinent nose and the rolling vernacular of Pittsburgh delicate upon her sweet lips. Before love, in this, her latest reincarnation, Toddy fell down and worshiped, beautifully and ridiculously, with pathetic earnestness, as very young men must always worship when she appears. And because Toddy was a youth of no very great com-plexity, because his experience had failed to prick his sluggish intellect out of its adolescent naïveté, (Continued on page 128)

When the



If there were a State law (and there probably will be) compelling hotels to note the Bertillon and other popular measurements of their guests, the slip which the clerk in the Regent Hotel, New York City, made out would have read, instead of "Mr. and Mrs. Walter J. Peters, Dyke, Ohio," somewhat more specifically as follows:

"Walter J. Peters, Dyke, Ohio. Five feet something. Medium weight. Medium eyes. Medium collar. Medium bicycle number. Remarks: Carries three pencils and a fountain pen on clips in upper vest pocket. Has evidently posed for figure of 'Voter' in political cartoons. Wears derby which was probably the first one he tried on in the store.

"Mrs. Walter J. Peters, Dyke, Ohio. No particular height or weight—just Mrs. Walter J. Peters, Γyke, Ohio. Remarks:

In other words, you and your wife. I and my wife. The world and his wife. The backbone of the nation. Mr. and Mrs. Walter J. Peters, Dyke, Ohio, now registered at the Regent Hotel, New York City, and expecting to give ten days to seeing what all this talk is about, all this "New York this" and "New York that." "We'll give it a look," Mr. Peters had said, for Mr. Peters was

broad-minded

Do not get it into your head that the Peters' were rustics. They were no more rustics than Mr. and Mrs. Walter J. Peters of 4321 West 115th St., New York City, or Mr. and Mrs. Walter Peters of 1234 East Division Street, Chicago, Illinois. Dyke, Ohio, they were considered very nice people, and subscribed to the symphony concerts every winter. Mr. Peters took a great interest in the birds (or "feathered friends") of Central Ohio, an interest which he maintained even when the wire works, of which he was treasurer, merged with the insulating concern, and he was made vice-president of the combination. The only thing about

eters

Robert C. Benchley

Mr. Benchley, as a dramatic critic, once gently chided a comedian and was told by the actoramong other things—that if he knew so much and how easy it was to be funny, just let him try it. So Mr. Benchley walked on the stage at the Music Box Revue one night, and was such a success that he was engaged for the season. And next day he panned his own performance!

Mr. Peters that was in any way odd was that, when irritated, he was quite likely to kill the offending party. But more of that

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After a quiet night in the heavily carpeted precincts of the Regent Hotel (it would be hard to imagine Mr. and Mrs. Peters spending anything but a quiet night anywhere), they arose to greet their first day in New York with smiling faces. Mr. Peters gathered his pajamas about his waist (one end of the string had slipped through the tunnel and become lost, so that it was useless from a practical point of view and worse than useless pictorially) and surveyed the great, cruel city from their window on the seventeenth floor. It looked down on the roof of a fifteen-story

office building across the street.
"So this is New York," said Mr. Peters. "Well, I can't say much for it so far." Had New York been articulate, and had

it looked up at the window from below, it could have said the same of Mr. Peters.

But Mrs. Peters was in no condition to offer any obiter dicta on the subject of the great metropolitan failure, as she was, at that moment, running a gigantic tubful of water in the bathroom, a process which carried with it such a roar that she was conscious merely of a desire on the part of her husband to communicate with her.

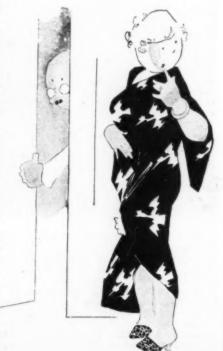
"What did you say?" she shouted.

"I said that I don't see much to rave about in-oh, never mind!"

But Mrs. Peters had shut off the water and was all ears.

"I can't hear a word you say," she "What was it, called.

"I'll tell you later," said her husband, and



Came to

Illustrated bv John Held, Ir.

turned wearily from the window. Was it always going to be like this, he wondered. In the twenty-one years of their married life, Mrs. Peters had heard him the first time he spoke perhaps two dozen times, and he had heard her the first time she spoke not quite a dozen. The futility of the whole thing came over him in a wave of ennui, and he got back into bed.

"What do you want to do first today?" he said, when she emerged re-"I supfulgent from the bathroom. pose we ought to see the town."

"I must go to some store and get some edging for Mary's table-cover." said Mrs. Peters, "and then I want to look around and see if they have any coats that I would wear."

"You couldn't get those in Dyke, I suppose," said Mr. Peters. "We have to come across country a thousand miles for you to get edging for Mary's tablecloth?

"You can do what you please," was the reply. "There certain things that I have to get. What would you suggest?"

Well, I suppose that we ought to see some of the sights like the Aquarium and the Woolworth Building. Perhaps the paper

would tell us what there is going on today. And we could have breakfast sent up to the room. Most everybody in New York has breakfast sent up to the room.

The morning paper which the cold-hearted, practical city had left at the Peters' door free of charge gave them an idea for a

program. On the editorial page was a list of revelries in which one might indulge if one had really come to New York with high-life in mind. It was called: "What Is Going on Today."

"Read it," said Mrs. Peters, blush-

So Mr. Peters began: "'Meeting Association of Workers Among Delinquent Children, Hotel Commodore, eight o'clock.'

Women's Democratic 'Meeting. Club. Hotel Commodore. Eight e'clock.'

"There's a nasty jam right there at the start," said Mr. Peters. "Both meeting at the Hotel Commodore at eight o'clock. I'd like to drop around and see the fun."



"'Meeting. Teachers' Union. Ethical Culture Society Building, 2 West Sixty-fourth Street, eight-fifteen.'

Too far uptown," objected Mrs. Peters.

"'Meeting, Academy of Medicine. Section of Orthopedic Sur-ry. 17 West Forty-third Street. Eight-thirty."

"We haven't got the clothes to wear to that," said Mrs. Peters. "I imagine that will be rather dressy."

"Well, here are some lectures," suggested her husband. "How about 'The Story of Anesthesia,' by Irving Weitz, Sc. D., at "How

Wadleigh High School, 115th Street near Seventh Avenue?"
"What do you think?" asked Mrs. Peters.
"I would say no," said her husband. "Besides, all of these are part of the night life of the town. They all begin at eight o'clock tonight. We can't stay in bed until eight o'clock. Here are some museums that open this morning. There is the Museum of the American Indian, Broadway at 155th Street. Admission free. We ought to see something on Broadway, I suppose. It's the center of New York life, they say."
"I simply have to get that edging before we do anything.

Walter. You go ahead and do Broadway if you want to.

"Well, supposing we have breakfast first, and then go and see

Grant's Tomb. That's always good." So it was decided that they were to eat a little something and set out on a tour of inspection beginning with Grant's Tomb and whatever that might lead to. That is one thing about New York. You never know what one thing is going to lead to.

Stepping to the telephone, Mr. Peters asked for two glasses of orange-juice, two orders of scrambled eggs and bacon, two cups of coffee and two orders of buttered toast.

"I will give you Room Service," said the operator.

"Two glasses of orange-juice, two orders of scrambled eggs—"
"This is the news-stand. You want Room Service."
"Don't I, though!" said Mr. Peters, and jiggled the hook.

"Hello! I want two orders of orange-juice-two glasses of scrambled eggs-

"I will give you Room Service," said the operator, and much to Mr. Peters' surprise, did. But by that time, Mr. Peters had lost his appetite and ordered simply two glasses of orange-juice and coffee.

"If we can get hold of George Bostwick, he can steer us onto

some good places to go," he said as he turned, trembling, from the "He has lived here a long time and ought to know what telephone. "I never liked his father much," said Mrs. Peters.

"Oh, Fred Bostwick is all right, once you get to know him.

And George has really done very well here in New York, I understand. We might call him up. Fred said that he was in the book—under 'George Bostwick.'"

"You call up George Bostwick, and I'll go and get that edging and look at some coats. Then we can meet somewhere for lunch. Mary said that I'd probably find something just what I want at Lord and Alts. That must be near here, because that's Fifth

Avenue right over there."

But Mr. Peters was not paying attention. He was looking for his trousers. Beginning slowly, with all the confidence in the world, he looked on the chairs, carrying on the conversation as he Then, as he scoured the closet and found that they were not there, a premonition of disaster seized him and he en-

"Where are my pants?" he asked as calmly as he could.
"How should I know?" answered the Little Woman who had stood by him through thick and thin in emergencies like this for "Are you sure you had them on when you wenty-one years.

"I must have had, or the woman out there at the desk in the hall would have said something about it."

"Look in the bag.

"My whole suit is gone! What a town this is! I might have known that-

Mr. Peters paused and stepped to the telephone.
"The valet,

please," he said, quietly. "Hello, the valet? I gave you a suit last night to be pressed. Are you wearing it today, or could I have it back?"

"I was just going to tell you when you called," said Mrs. Peters, "that you gave it to the valet last night."

"Well, the whole thing worked out just right, didn't

it?" saia Mr. Peters. And there was something in his eye that Mrs. Peters didn't like. It reminded her of the day last summer when he had killed the postman in Dyke.

"Whatever we are going to do today, we have got to step lively," said Mr. Peters. "Here it is almost ten o'clock." And sure

enough, here it was.
"We can't do anything until
we've had some breakfast," said the practical woman.

"That's right! Breakfast! I knew there was something." Mr. Peters took up the telephone, still warm from his encounter with the valet.

"I ordered breakfast up here half an hour ago: two orders of orange-juice, two-

"I will give you Room Service," said the operator.
"A likely story," replied Mr. Peters, and hung up.

On the table Mrs. Peters discovered a brochure issued by the hotel company for the information of its guests. It had a picture of Manhattan Island on the cover, with the site of the hotel indicated in red. Inside was a list of points of interest under the heading, "What to See in New York."

"Here we are," said Mrs. Peters. "'What to See in New York.' That list in the paper was no good. Listen to this. 'For the visitor to New York...'"

"What's the sense in making out a list of the things we are going to see," interrupted Mr. Peters, "if we aren't ever going to get out of this hotel? I feel as if I had been born here, right over in that corner there. By the time they get those pants of mine back, it will be time to take them off, and have them pressed again, and go to bed." He went to the telephone. "Give me the valet, please," he said with forced politeness.

But at this point there was a knock at the door, and Mr. Peters, still very informally clad in a simple creation of flannel, was forced to hang up and retire to the bathroom while Mrs. Peters

opened the door. It was the breakfast.

Although the Peters' had been married twenty-one years and had certificates and rings galore to prove it, they both felt and looked very guilty when the waiter entered the room with the tray. Mr. Peters, whose lurking presence in the bathroom could hardly be concealed, was sure that the waiter suspected something illicit, and Mrs. Peters made a brave but unsuccessful attempt to look out the window while the things were being set. She kept catching the waiter's eye, and detected something there which she was sure was a leer.

"Just put them down there, anywhere," she said in what sounded to her like the tone of a scarlet woman. And as she signed the check, she gave the man two dollars, which was a little more than the breakfast itself came to, as if to say: "Take this, my man, and see if you can hold your tongue when you get downstairs."

Mr. Peters, arrayed in a dressinggown, appeared stealthily as the door closed on the waiter, and they sat down to breakfast. It consisted of one glass of orange-juice, a pot of chocolate and some corn muffins.

"We didn't order this, did we?" said Mrs. Peters.

"I don't remember," replied her husband. And then he sat for a moment, buried in thought. "Did you pack my revolver?" he then asked.

Mrs. Peters glanced at her nails. "No, Walter, I didn't," she replied. "You're lying to me," he said

he said, very distinctly. "I might want to clean it."

of chocolate nervously. "Shall we start out now, Walter?" she said in a pleading tone. "Let's be going up to Grant's Tomb. We

may get there too late if we don't start now."

Mr. Peters thought awhile. "All right," he said finally. "We'll go." And Mrs. Peters breathed a sigh of relief, for over his face had come a calm, and in his tone was almost a lethargy.

"My suit!" he said, and went to the telephone. Like magic there was a knock at the door. It was the valet.

With him was the waiter for the breakfast dishes.

"It is half-past eleven," said Mr. Peters quietly.

"A quarter to twelve, I think, sir," replied the valet.

"You're right. A quarter to twelve," said Mr. Peters. He held the door open for the waiter, who staggered out with the tray, and for the valet, who tiptoed after him. Then he stepped out with the held with the door. Mr. Peters. out into the hall with them both and shut the door. Mrs. Peters went to the window and looked down on the roof across the street. A man was there flying a kite. She watched him as he ran back and forth, and thought how quickly New York life draws one into its maw. Probably five years ago this man on the roof had come to the metropolis from some smaller city, clean and strong, with a clear eye, and a will to win. And now-Mrs. Peters turned sadly away from the window just as her husband entered from the

"Look at this man flying a kite over on the roof there," she

Mr. Peters looked, but said nothing. Then he went and put on

his trousers. "It is too late to get to Grant's Tomb (Continued on page 119)



"What do you want it for, Walter?" she whispered. "Now. Walter—" "I - just - wanted - to -know - if - it - was - here," Mrs. Peters pushed away her cup

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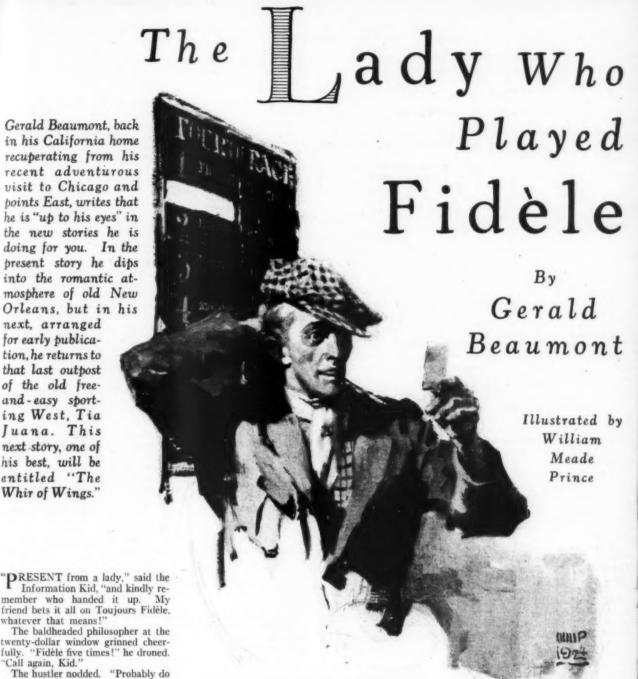
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"Sweet ragged doll!" gasped the Informa-tion Kid. "I hold the key to the mint!"

Information Kid, "and kindly remember who handed it up. friend bets it all on Toujours Fidèle. whatever that means!'

The baldheaded philosopher at the twenty-dollar window grinned cheerfully. "Fidèle five times!" he droned.

The hustler nodded. "Probably do that little thing. Habit is hard to break.

Counting his tickets, he squeezed through the crowded ring and headed for the steps of the grandstand. A hand clutched at his sleeve, and he

turned to confront the wizened figure of Henry the Rat, small and dark and very suspicious. Henry wouldn't bet that the sun would rise. The latter took one glance at the numbered pasteboards and then consulted his program.
"That thing!" he wailed. "A hundred bucks! Whyn't you

Whyn't you sink it? Who's the sap? hold it out? Wherewhere is he?"

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"It aint a sap," protested the Kid. "It's a lady, and it's her first bet, and she's playin' it on a hunch. If you think I'm goin' up against that combination, you're crazy!"

They were still arguing the matter when the clamor of a gong

sent a wave of spectators surging toward the rail. Less than a minute later, a little black mare, running in bandages, led her field home by two open lengths, thereby registering one of the biggest upsets in the racing history of New Orleans. prices were finally posted on the pari-mutuel board, the waiting crowd vented its feelings in a wild yell. The winner would pay better than two hundred to one!

"Sweet ragged doll!" gasped the Information Kid. "I hold in my lily-white hand the key to the mint! Mother, mother, mother, pin a rose on me!"

Henry the Rat hissed into his ear: "Cash it quick, and I'll meet you at the side gate. There's a train pullin' out in a few minutes. We can-

The Kid shook his head. "Back up and try a fresh start, Henry. Lemme go!"

But the Rat clung to him: "Listen, Kid, listen: This is the hand o' God! We can go to Spain and live forever on thirty cents We can-

"Ye-ah, I know. We can go to the penitentiary and live cheaper'n that. Leggo, pal, or I'll bust you."

HE freed himself none too gently, and made for the cashier's window. An observant wolf-pack closed in on him: "Long Shot" Murphy, "Silver Dream" Charlie, "Sunset" Mike and others of the tribe.

"How'll you have it?" said the gentleman at the window.

"Brother," sighed the young king of the hustlers, "nothing would please me better than to have you count it out in dollar bills, one at a time. But"-he cast a significant look at the crowd behind him-"better let me talk to Eddie a moment."

The head of the syndicate that controlled the betting privilege made his appearance, and the Kid whispered a plea.

"Sure," said Eddie. "Who'll I make it out to?"

The Kid reflected a moment. The lady's name was unknown

to him, but he was never at a loss for whimsical concepts.

"Make it payable," he directed, "to "The Lady Who Played Fidèle.' I'll identify her at the bank. Atta boy, hand it over!"

He pocketed the slip of paper, deafened his ears to the importunities of his pals, and eluded them by the simple expedient of slipping in one door of the track café and out another. Then he mounted the stairs of the grandstand, muttering to himself: "Boy, oh boy, this is the biggest killing I've ever seen outside the stockyards of Chicago! Now, where did I leave Hetty Green? Ah, there she is! Sweet shades of France! I'll bet she knew Napoleon on the Island of Elba!"

It was indeed an unusual patroness of the turf toward whom the hustler picked his way, guided by a fluttering cambric beacon. Her age was indefinable. She might have been twenty—forty sixty! She had the lissome figure of a girl, the piquant, flower features of a child, and yet there was the unmistakable sad suggestion of something that had been carefully preserved under glass, something that would crumple into dust at the first touch of a rude hand. She was a vision that a dreaming, gray-haired lover might summon at lamplight from the realm of memory. All these things were noted by the shrewd gray eyes of the Information Kid, whose nightly prayer to Allah was: "Lord, let me learn something new.

He paused before the object of his attention and held out the "Lady," he inquired respectfully, "is it in your mind, by

any chance, to do this often?"

Mais non!" she answered. "Tiens, we have won, then?" "Oh, my Gawd! Didn't you know it? Lady, you interest me! Lamp the figures; read the good news while I whistle the Mar-

seillaise.

The little lady who had played Fidèle stifled a scream, as she beheld the figures. The check fluttered from nerveless hands and the hustler swooped on it. "Lady, lady," he pleaded, "have a

heart! This is real jack!"

"Non, non! Ce n'est pas possible! Cynthia! Voyez donc?"

Over her shoulder, she directed a stream of excited chatter to some one in the seat behind her. The Information Kid became aware of a portly negress, old, apparently, as the Vieux Carré itself, who leaned forward, replying crooningly to her mistress, as though the latter were indeed a child. The young knight of the betting-ring waited patiently and than proffered the check "Mam'selle, strange as it may seem, I assure you that Christmas has indeed come again. I'll meet you at the bank tomorrow morning at-"

She clapped her hands and laughed up at him: "But, mon enfant, we have not even the carfaire for to go home. Rien de tout! That was the last bill! And now behold a fortune for which I have no use! Mon Dieu, it is too strange! If you but

knew-

She paused and regarded him with dazed perplexity

The Information Kid tossed his cigarette away. "This is getting better every minute," he commented. "Mean to tell me you were broke, and now you don't know what to do with all this money? Lafayette, we are here!" He touched his cap in a whimsical salute. "Right this way, lady. Your carriage awaits. Permit me to take you home!"

FOR a moment the Lady Who Played Fidèle looked deep into the eyes of the youth who stood before her. He had a feeling that he was poised on the brink of adventure, that she was weighing him in the scales of feminine instinct.
"Bien!" she consented. "Le bon Dieu is acting and not I.

But there remains the pleasure of knowing with whom I am ac-

For an instant he hung his head. A fleeting shadow darkened the gray eyes and then was gone. "Mam'selle," he smiled, "my business in life is to answer questions. That's me, lady; I'm the Information Kid-tell you anything in the world, but my right

The little woman smiled her comprehension. "Ciel!" she mur-And then aloud: "But, mon jeune ami, "Moi aussi!" mured. who, then, am I?"

He studied her a moment. "Suppose we make it Mam'selle

Sport?" She clapped her hands and gave the sharp, joyous cry of a

bird.

"Superb!" she laughed. "Dieu, I have been alone too long. Allons, M'sieur Keed! Come what may, I shall be Mam'selle

Sport.

He gave her his arm, and followed by the portly servant, they descended the broad stairs, and presently the north gates closed on the whimsical king of the hustlers and the mysterious Lady Who Played Fidèle.

THE house was on the road to Pontchartrain, and they reached it at dusk—a winter dusk with the last shades of sundown lingering on a lavender landscape. There was a brick wall, iron gates lurching from broken hinges, a weed-grown driveway, dead awns and then the house itself, set among spectral oaks from whose extended arms hung long strands of mournful moss. Once, indeed, it must have been a house of houses, a blending of French and Spanish influences, such as one still sees in the Vieux Carré. Now it stood there, gray and ghostly, an impoverished beau in the last stages of genteel decay. There was no sign of life, no sound save the spin of gravel under rubber tires as the cab came to a stop.

For a brief moment the Information Kid, who was not afraid of anything that drew the breath of life, was tempted to call all bets off while there was yet time. He wished devoutly that he had brought along his pal, though he well appreciated that had Henry the Rat been along, they would at this moment be flying down the open road, never stopping to look around until they

reached Henri's Petit Place on Iberville Street.

But the Rat was not among those present. The Kid paid the driver, instructed him to call at nine o'clock, and reassured himself by a glance at the ancient negress in her tignon headdress. "If Mam'selle Sport is a spook," he reflected, "that ton of chocolate wouldn't be hangin' around. Yea, bo, nothing could be more certain!"

He followed his hostess into a dark hallway, where she left him for a moment and returned with candles. He felt like an archeolo-

gist violating a sanctuary of the Pharaohs.
"A thousand apologies," she laughed, "but you brought it on yourself. There are thirty rooms, and we live in but three. yourself comfortable in this chair. Cynthia will prepare dinner. Meanwhile, there is somewhere a bottle of cognac. Pardon, a moment!"

A little later they faced each other across a table in a large and formal salon, illumined only by four candles and an ancient whale-oil lamp suspended in a crystal chandelier. Cynthia flitted in and out, bearing miracles of the marketplace: hot breads, oysters, crayfish, pompano, pralines and finally coffee such as the Information Kid believed one could only get at Antoine's. Talleyrand described it once: "Black as death, sweet as love and hot as hell!"

"You are silent, M'sieur Keed, for one whom I like to think is so young and droll!"

The hustler lit a cigarette and leaned back in his chair. "Just wonderin'," he answered, "just wonderin' where it was I saw you before.

A small hand fluttered to her throat, and she half arose, then checked herself, and sank back, dark eyes reflecting incredulity and pale lips curved in a smile of relief. "Ce n'est pas possible!

Tell me, M'sieur Keed, quel age avez vous? How old?"
"Well," he defended, "I'm over twenty-one."
"By a few years only," she conceded, smiling, "and I—mon

For almost that long I have been dead!" Dieu! The Information Kid dropped his coffee-cup. me!" he pleaded. "Now, listen, sweet lady—" "Allah defend

She smiled up at him, allaying his alarm with an index finger that wagged a negative. "Non, non—have no fear. I did not die in that sense—malheureusement! "The heart will break, but brokenly live or." You are young, M'sieur Keed, and perhaps

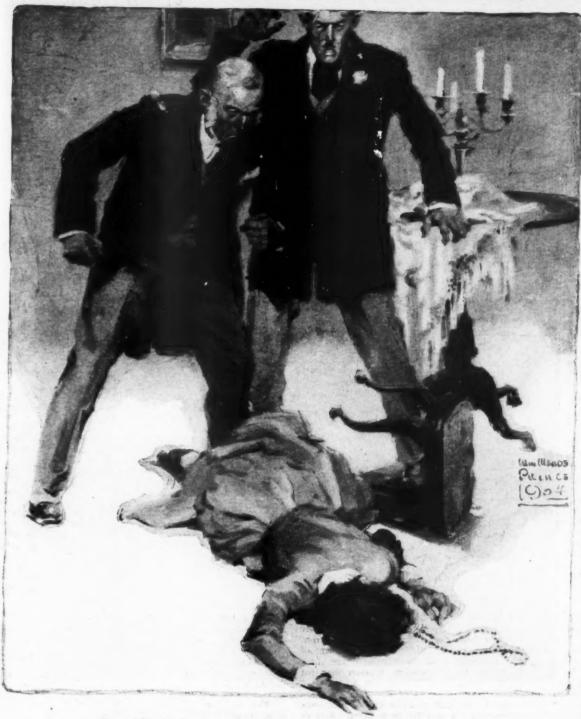
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She proclaimed herself a courtesan and dared him to marry her. Her father struck her down.

you will not understand, and yet there is in your eyes something—" She hesitated, looked down, and with a slight shrug of her shoulders, murmured under her breath: "Something très gentille!"

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He broke the long silence that followed: "Mam'selle, do you mind telling me the meaning of Toujours Fidèle? That little mare wasn't supposed to be anywheres near ready. Frenchy Bonville owns her, and he didn't have a nickel riding for him. Lady, how come you to play her with your last cent?"

Lady, how come you to play her with your last cent?"

For a moment there was no reply. It was as though she had not heard him. Then, rising, she left the table, and glided noiselessly into a shadowed corner of the huge room. His eyes followed as she found a seat before an ancient grand piano, trailed

a slim finger dreamily over dusty keys, and then, with her head slightly tilted back, began the soft accompaniment to a song. It was a haunting melody he had never before heard, a French chanson of gallant days. Presently the tempo changed and she was singing in English:

Whene'er I hear that music soft and old, Three hundred years are mist that rolls away. The thirteenth Louis reigns, and I behold A green land golden in the dying day—

The youth, sitting alone by the candle-lit table, never knew where the song ended and the recital began. Mam'selle sat there



with her back turned toward him, and the music was now an improvised accompaniment for a reverie that was voiced aloud. He knew that she was no longer aware of his presence. He was but an unseen eavesdropper, listening to the self-communion of the last of the Fidèles. The candles spluttered, dimmed, and grew brighter; the musty air was perfumed; and the far wall of the room fell away, disclosing the magic stage of Aladdin, from which one curtain after another was slowly raised.

one curtain after another was slowly raised.

The court of France! The first of the Fidèles: A Royalist to her dainty fingertips—exquisite as a humming-bird—married to the one she hated, and openly the mistress of the one she adored! Then the Reign of Terror—unbelievable horrors—and the second Fidèle, more fragile and beautiful than the first! She was sitting on a balcony high above the heads of the mob, one hand clasping a tiny fan that bore the hidden insignia of the lost monarchy. Her head was held high; her lips were smiling; and her eyes followed the figure of the young Marquis D'Etange as he mounted the steps of the guillotine. The blade descended; Mam'selle

Fidèle's hand quivered, and the tiny fan fell to the floor. When

an attendant turned to her, she was dead!

The fairy film spun on. Women with the faces of angels, hearts of coquettes, souls of butterflies, fluttering ever around the divine flame of a single love until their singed wings were stilled. There had always been a Fidèle, it appeared, in whose blood was the seed of the courtesan, a Fidèle who scorned the gossip of the world, and persisted in loving, not wisely but too well. All but the last!

The hypnotized eyes of the young king of the hustlers now beheld a far different scene: a vista of New Orleans of twenty years before, narrowing down to convent walls, long avenues of oak trees, groves of pecan, and broad terraces that overlooked the river. Girls, in convent attire, were flitting through the corridors or wandering in groups under the friendly trees. His attention was instantly attracted to one, a laughing, mischievous demoiselle of seventeen, with dark eyes, vivid coloring and lips like the bud of an unborn kiss. He had no trouble in recognizing the strain.



"Say, listen!" he faltered. "Something's happened! That aint Mam'selle Sport!"

father, and he in turn held conference with the one to whom she was pledged.

And to what end! They might have known that the young doctor would defend himself gallantly under the attack of paid assassins. Such was indeed the case! In the morning one man was dead, Prince Charming was in prison, and the papers were filled with gossip that was quickly hushed. Ciel, what a travesty on justice! What a trap! Witnesses" ready to swear one way or the other! How plainly she perceived he had no chance unless the proper influence was brought to bear! How easily they spoke of death, or life imprisonment for one whose kisses were still warm upon her lips! How benignly did her vieux fiancé consent to overlook her indiscretion! And then, with what craft did he indicate how she might secure the freedom of the one who was so tall and handsome! Dieu! The world is indeed a stage. and the play varies but little!

The slender sword of a woman was now unsheathed. Eagerly she made the pact, clutching a crucifix and swearing by all that was holy, that if this man were spared, she would marry the other and remain his

wife until death parted them. Bien! He was acquitted, and the next day she was to fulfill her promise. That night she eluded their vigilance, sought out the young physician in his lodgings, and saying no word of what had happened, gave herself to him. Then, in the morning, in the presence of her father, she faced her intended husband, told him what had happened, proclaimed herself a courtesan, and dared him to marry her!

Her father struck her down, felled her with his fist! But his anger was nothing compared to the insane fury of the other. For a moment it seemed that he would die. But no—apoplexy intervened, a stroke that left him only partly a man. And then behold his revenge! Exquisite! Machiavellian! He held her to her vow, bound her to his stricken body with the holy chains of matrimony, and took her away to become—if not actually his wife, then his unpaid nurse, his heartbroken slave, the tortured plaything of his vengeful fancy!

Her tomb was a sheltered château in the south of France, and in this she died and yet went on living. (Continued on page 121)

She was still a child; yet her impoverished father, with the customs of France still strong upon him, had already harkened to a request for her hand from a suitor who was an unquestioned power in the community. The latter had agreed to wait, but long before the appointed time arrived, the last of the Fidèles had already pledged her young heart once and forever. It began in a girlish escapade, a nocturnal flight from convent walls, followed by an appearance en masque at the opening ball of the Carnival. He was very tall and handsome, a young physician in whom the joy of life ran strong. They met the next night, and the next. Madness engulfed them. Dieu, what joy to be adored and to adore! But she was watched, suspected, betrayed by one who was jealous! And dear Lord, locked up on the very night of the Mardi Gras itself, that night of nights when she had so hoped to see him as her Prince Charming kneeling before her with the silver slipper that should proclaim her to the assemblage as his queen. In vain she pleaded, struggled in a frenzy, shrieking that she was a Fidèle and could love no one else. They sent for her

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By

George Gibbs

Mr. Gibbs' previous novel in this magazine, "Sackcloth and Scarlet," is being made into a "feature film," and all the art work pertaining thereto will be done by the author himself. Incidentally, Mr. Gibbs recently was represented at the great annual exhibition of American artists by two widely dissimilar canvases, a nude and a moonlight marine, both of them painted last summer, that attracted no end of general interest and critical praise.

Illustrated by the Author

The Story So Far:

JOSIE BRANT had seemed desperate enough when simple-hearted Peter Randle took her in. He had found her, he told his fellow-artist Wingate, lost in the rain, staring down into the canal. She had almost no money, and—she was going to have a baby.
"What could I do?" Randle explained. "I took her

in, of course. I couldn't let her die of pneumonia, could I?

"A baby. H'm! Where's her husband?" asked Wingate gruffly.

"I don't know," Peter answered.

"Don't you realize what these people in Red Bridge will say about you?" persisted Wingate. "That the baby is yours, of course."

"I hadn't thought of that," said Peter. "But it isn't, Wingate. And if they're going to talk, I don't see how

the devil I can stop em.

And that, Randle presently made clear to Wingate, was his decision in the matter. Later, however, he did change his mind about one thing and consented to accompany Wingate on a jaunt to New York. Wingate had told Randle that he was going stale and that a change from his retired life in this Delaware River artist colony near Red Bridge would help his work; but that was not Randle's reason for going to the metropolis.

Peter proved a wallflower at Jimmy Blake's gay studio party in New York, to which Wingate dragged him, until two encounters woke him up. The first was a conversation with a wealthy "bachelor girl" known as Tommy Keith, who was intrigued by Peter's simplicity and made much of him. The second jolt came when he heard the name of the dark young man who was Tommy Keith's suitor—Jack Salazar. For as Randle told Wingate. Salazar was the man he had come to New York to find

With this knowledge Wingate consulted his friend the dancer Lola Oliver. They earnestly hoped to prevent Tommy's marriage to the notorious Salazar, and they knew it could be stopped if Josie Brant's story could be brought to her; wherefore they arranged to have Peter Randle call upon Tommy at her Ritz apart-



"I did know Josie Brant," said Salazar. "But if she says she has any claim on me, she's a liartook a pace forward. clenching his fist.

ment, and Lola persuaded him to undertake to tell Tommy the story of Josie Brant. (The story continues in detail:)

OMMY'S acquiescence in Lola's proposal had been a surprise even to herself, for she wasn't given, as a rule, to wasting her valuable time upon unimportant matters. But it just happened that her plans for the afternoon and early evening had failed, and unless somebody came in (Jack Salazar had gone out of town for the day), she would have been obliged to read a stupid book or (worse yet) be driven back upon her own thoughts, an occupation at the moment very uncongenial.

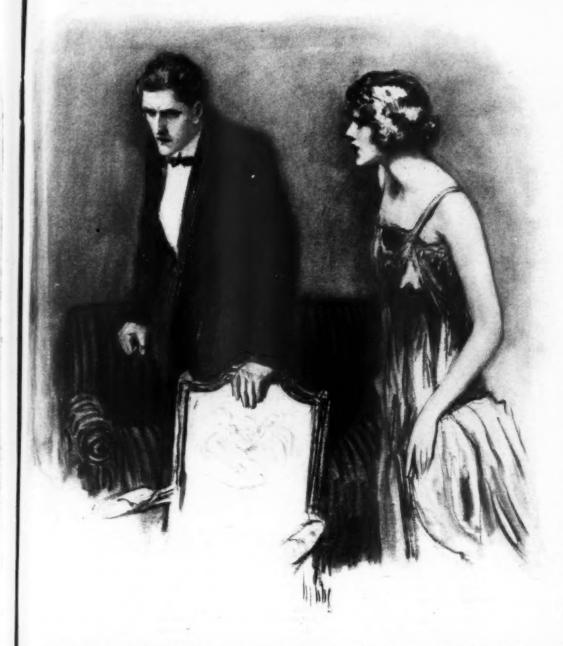
But no matter how or where her affections are engaged, no woman is averse to a new conquest. No lady of the limousine,

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Marriage



happy in her own sentimental affairs, is unaware of a glance of approval from the sidewalk. Therefore Tommy, though with a slight sense of a joke, dressed as carefully for the visit of Peter Randle as though she had expected to be going into the most formidable and interesting of company—her new orchid silk with silver lace that she had actually been saving for a more important occasion. She had some pride in convincing the visitor that she was both a woman and pretty.

Peter entered the darkened drawing-room—for Tommy had a fine sense of the value of dim lighting—wearing a more than usually sober air. The room was close and smelled abominably of some obscure and insidious perfume. He was very uncomfortable, depressed as though at a funeral. Tommy rose, a violet

and blue wraith, discarding the evening papers in which she had been reading the delightful account of a harrowing murder. Peter had, he supposed, expected for some reason to see her in the yellow dress that she had worn the previous evening, and she seemed like a person he had never met before. This somehow made his difficulties greater. He was very sorry for her, because she seemed a nice sort of creature, entirely too nice for the fellow Salazar.

Lola had done her part thoroughly. She had, with great care and at some length, impressed upon Peter his duty to tell Tommy Keith all that he knew of Josie Brant and John Salazar. Peter had demurred at first, contending that his first mission was with Salazar himself. But Lola had been rather insistent upon Tommy's claims on the information, pointing out the danger of delay, and reinforcing her argument by the statement that he would add strength to his mission by Tommy's repudia-

tion of her lover—that she would be a possible help in insisting that Salazar do his duty by the unfortunate girl. And Peter had at last agreed to the unpleasant visit, very sorry indeed for Tommy, who was soon to be so greatly disillusioned. But he was now primed with purpose, intensely in earnest with the legitimacy of his errand.

A Pekingese pup sniffed suspiciously at his trouser-leg, while another less venturesome yapped at him from a distance. Peter blinked at Tommy's dress, then sat beside her on the couch, where she offered him a cigarette, took one and disposed herself among the pillows. His embarrassment was manifest, and he seized upon the diversion of the suddenly friendly Pekingese which was pawing at his knee. Tommy examined his profile, comparing this man with the perfections of Salazar. Surely not a pic-

turesque creature, but bronzed and strong. Eyes deeply set under shaggy brows, good nose, strong chin. Why was it that under shaggy brows, good nose, strong chin. he was not good-looking? Because he sat with toes turned in? Or because one of the studs of his dress shirt had pulled out? But there was the same gentleness about him that she had observed the night before, and a little greater awkwardness. His bony hands took up the Pekingese pup and slowly rubbed its ears. "I suppose you're wondering-er-why I've come to see you

so soon?" he began.

Tommy met his gaze curiously and then smiled.

"I was hoping that it was because you wanted to see me soon,"

she said lightly.

"Oh—er—of course. Of course I wanted to see you soon.
Or—er—I wouldn't have been here," he said brightly. "But you
—you did ask me to come. Now, didn't you?"

"Oh, yes. You know, I like dogs. So do you. Perhaps that's

what made me forgive you for calling me names.

"Oh, say-you don't mean that!" he said awkwardly. "You're I wouldn't say anything to hurt you if I could a fine girl.

help it, for the world."

She tried to keep from laughing and failed. He stared at her ide-eyed. Why was she laughing? He hadn't said anything inny. He was still trying to find the answer to this riddle when she spoke.

"I'm very sensitive," she said demurely. "You seemed so wise

that I knew everything you said must be true."

He frowned. "I'm not wise—not about women. They always annoy me. I never know what to say to them. I never know what they mean or what they're going to do next."

"Not even when they tell you pretty things as I'm doing?"

she asked quizzically

"Well, it's nice of you, of course. But it's no use," he said. "You don't mean anything you say. And I know you don't mean it. It just complicates matters."

THIS was brief enough—uncompromising in its baldness. She was annoyed—but less annoyed by his indifference than the casual impertinence of his language. She felt very much like getting up and showing him the door. But she found herself still slightly curious as to his last words.

"You can't blame me for trying to make conversation," she "What do you mean by 'complicating matters'?

He turned quickly toward her, his blue eyes emitting little

sparks of eagerness.

"Well, you see, I came here with the express purpose of seeing you about something. I've got a lot to say, and it's not easy to begin. In fact, I don't know how to begin at all, because what I've got to say is very unpleasant."

She was aware of a growing interest, and straightened slowly. "Surely no more unpleasant than what you've already said,"

she replied caustically.

He stared at her as though he hadn't understood her meaning

and went on rapidly:

"Yes-more unpleasant than that. I've got to say what I came here for, whether I want to or not. It's hard to say it, because it's no fun making people unhappy-especially if you I only met you last night, but you gave me an impression of being too fine a sort not to have a word of warning when I can give it.'

Great blundering idiot! What on earth was he driving at? But there was no doubting his sincerity. Whatever he had to say was born of a conviction that he was within his rights in speaking.

"It's you who are complicating matters now," she said dryly. "What do you want to tell me? Go ahead. I guess I can stand

"I-I don't want to tell you anything," he blurted out, "but I've got to. I've been placed in this position-by circumstances. I've got to take the privilege-whether you let me or not."

He was making heavy weather of it, but she was really curious

now and his difficulties only made her angrier. "Can't you go on?" she asked contemptuously.

He put the dog down and sawed the air with his hands a moment.

"It's about your friend-this fellow Salazar," he said explosively.

"Ah!" The sound from her throat was at once a gasp of surprise, a sigh of relief.

"Jack!" She found a rigid dignity at her own mention of the name. Again the impulse to show her visitor the door-again rejected. "What have you got to say about Jack Salazar?" she asked slowly, her words, her stare, both measured.

HE met her look and seemed to have a sense of her sudden hostility. It stiffened him a little, but did not deflect him from his purpose.

"Well, I came here to tell you that he's not the man you take him to be-he's not worthy of you-of any decent girl. He's

giving you what belongs to another woman.

"Oh, I see," she drawled as she stared at him, but he held her interest now. She tried to make her tones as careless as the shrug that went with them. There were other women in Jack's past. Of course, she knew it. But it shocked her to hear them spoken of by this strange visitor.
"And how are Mr. Salazar's private affairs any business of

yours?" she asked acidly

Her cold fury steadied him. "I'll tell you why," he went on. "Because his affairs have come into my own house and into my own life in a way that I can't let pass. I didn't want to get mixed up in them; I don't want to now. But there are some things that for the sake of common decency can't be ignored."

"Explain!" she broke in quickly.

"I will," he said. And then more slowly: "Did you ever hear of Josie Brant?"

"No. I don't make a practice—"

"Well, I'm going to tell you about her now. She's in my house at Red Bridge. I found her by the canal. She was in a bad way. I took her home, because she was sick and hadn't any other place to go. This man Salazar asked her to marry him—then betrayed her and left her. She tried to get him to marry her. She trusted him, believed in him—just as you trust him and believe in him-"Really!" she broke in. "I think I'm quite capable—"

He didn't seem to hear her. "She's going to have a baby. She doesn't know what to do. The affair just drifted on and on. First he promised to marry her; then he avoided her. And at last, when she insisted on his keeping his promise, he laughed at her, treated her brutally. She got sick, lost her job. When I found her, she was desperate, without money or hope, ready to kill herself."

"What have this woman's troubles to do with me?" she asked

coolly.

He straightened, turned, his eyes blazing blue fire. If he had seemed fatuous before, he was fanatic now. He went on passionately, and it was Tommy's gaze that fell before his.

"I can't believe you're in sympathy with this kind of brutality. I wont believe it. Even if you're in love with a man like that-

Tommy sprang to her feet away from him "Stop!" she cried. "I forbid you!"

He watched her while she paced up and down the room before m. Then she turned on him violently. "I thought you were queer, but I didn't think you were a fool. Nobody but a fool would dare to say the things you've said to me. Who told you I was in love with him? What business is it of yours who I'm in love with? Why did you come messing in my affairs?"

He had risen and stood facing her

"Because," he said evenly, "I didn't want to see you make the same mistake Josie Brant did."

Her glance flashed fury, but there was bewilderment in it too, fury at his continued impudence, bewilderment at the tone of solicitude.

"Don't you realize how insulting you are? Don't you?" she asked tensely, trembling with rage. "Or can't you realize it? Haven't you any feeling that you've taken a liberty no woman could ever forgive?

"No," he said slowly. "I thought you—you were fine enough to derstand." His voice dropped a note. "I—I still think so." understand." His voice dropped a note.

SHE went across to the table and leaned on it. His reply, and the tone of it, baffled her for the moment. When she spoke,

her voice was dry, hard and mechanical.

"Why should you care," she asked, "whom I love, or why?"

"Because," he said eagerly again, "you're worth saving from him, worth saving from yourself."

That was direct enough, insistent in its intimacy and frankness. And yet again it disarmed her.

"Thanks for the compliment." Her laugh, meant to be satirical, only succeeded in being neurotic. She was not hysterical, but she was surprised at her own lack of self-control.

Wont you," she gasped, "-wont you please go?"

He stared at her a moment and then bent his head in acquiescence-in acknowledgment of his failure.

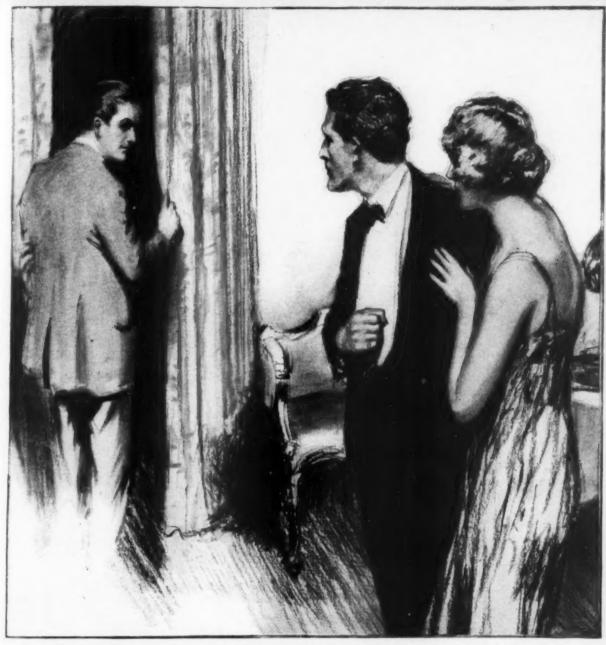
"Oh-of course I'll go. I oughtn't to have come."

He crossed behind her and walked to the door. He had almost passed into the small hallway, when she spoke again quickly:

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Salazar shrugged a shoulder. "Oh, very well-if you mean it." Tommy made no reply, and he turned slowly toward the door.

"Wait-wait!" And as he turned: "When did all of these things take place?"

This winter-three months ago."

She raised her head quickly, as if suddenly startled, and came toward him. Her whole frame was compact with some new interest. "You're sure of that?"

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"Why, yes. Of course I'm sure. I'd have no object in lying you. Now, would I?" to you.

She glanced at his face and then slowly turned away. As she looked past him, a dark flame danced in her eyes, a flame from the embers of her fury, he thought. But that anger seemed to have passed.

"Who is this woman?" she asked coldly.

"She was a ticket-seller at a motion-picture theater." "Oh! And you're sure the affair began this winter?"

Something had changed her attitude, her tone of voice. He couldn't understand, and still stood uncertainly.

"Yes. That's right. There are reasons why I remember—better reasons why Josie Brant does."

"Josie!" Her lips twisted unpleasantly. "A ticket-sellerwhere?"

"At the Undine..... But she has her rights. And her rights come before yours."

'And how are you going to get them for her?" she asked. "I'm going to tell this man that he's got to marry her. That's why I came to New York."

'And if he wont?" "Well, I-I'll have to see about that."

She stared at him with a new sense of his extraordinary persistence, also a sense of his quixotism upon this thankless and hopeless quest.

He heard a sound behind him, and saw her glance pass him and harden. He turned. Salazar had entered, and came forward

slowly, appraising Randle,
"Just from the train," he was saying to Tommy. "I got through sooner than I thought I would. . . . Why, what's the matter, Tommy?"

"You've met Mr. Randle," she said coolly. "Perhaps he'll

Peter had turned, now suddenly very full of his purpose. "Yes, I've been looking for you," he stated. "I waited in your office for two hours this morning."

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"Is that so?" Salazar's glance passed from Peter Randle to Tommy Keith, where it lingered for a moment in uncertain inquiry. Then he spoke to Peter: "And what can I do for

There were perhaps in the city no two men more dissimilar than these. Salazar exhibited all the graces of a skillful social technique. He was not as bulky as Randle, but compact, lithe and dest in his motions. His eyes (which women so admired) were omniscient. He had, it seemed, the woman's instinct for antipathy, and before Randle spoke, was already aware of a constraint in the situation not to be dissipated by the bright flash of his smile. He had noticed the visitor the night before at Jimmy Blake's, but had not considered him of importance. He therefore concealed his surprise at finding him with Tommy, and spoke with all the assurance in the world.

Peter frowned. Tommy stood silent, eying Salazar sharply.

"I-I came to see you in behalf of Josie Brant, Peter said brusquely.

He was so absorbed in the justice of his cause that words were mere bludgeons to be struck quickly. Salazar's gaze flickered for a second, then found itself. Whatever happened between him and this man in any other place, this was a name not to be mentioned here.

"Josie Brant! I don't know what you're talk-ing about," he said

glibly.

His assurance took

Peter aback.

"Oh, don't you!" said Peter. "Well, I—I'll have to—I think we can correct that." He was fishing about in the inside pocket of his dinner coat, and brought forth an envelope, soiled from much handling.

"It's rather stupid to say you don't know what I'm talking about." he said. He took a

photograph from the envelope-a handsome photograph of Salazar immediately recognizable. "Josie Brant gave me this. It's your pic-ture. It has writing on

the back-

Salazar reached quickly, but Peter moved the card aside-only to have it snatched from his fingers by Tommy, who read in a loud supercilious tone, "'For Josie-from her Sheik.'"

Then she laughed. It was not pleasant laughter. Salazar looked at her, bit his lip and frowned.

The sudden collapse of Tommy's confidence through the revelation of this meddling stranger had taken him off his guard, rendering for the moment useless his casual air of the conqueror. His mind was unequal to a sophistry to fit the case, and the usual appeal of his voice and glance seemed to have lost savor. The man caught in a lie must be inventive to rescue himself in such an emergency.

In the slack moment he fell back upon a platitude, spoken

rather sullenly:

"A fellow can't remember the name of every girl he knows." "You do admit that you know her, then?" asked Peter quickly.

"I don't see how this happens to be any affair of yours," Salazar replied coolly

"That's just what I wanted to explain. That's why-"

"Is this the place to explain?" "Yes," put in Tommy quickly, thrusting forward.

here-now

This surprised Salazar. With Tommy aiding the aggressor, he felt less and less assurance. He had seen her this way once before, and had been at some pains to explain himself. But there were greater difficulties

"Oh, I see," he muttered.



Tommy leaned against a chair-back, and turned quickly to Peter. "Go on, Mr. Randle," she said.

Peter needed no encouragement.

'Josie Brant is in my house in the country. It doesn't matter how she came there. But there she is; I know her story and

"And so do I," added Tommy.

Salazar looked from one to the other and shrugged. "Surely, Tommy," he said, "you can't intend me to discuss an old affair of mine like this with—with a stranger."
"Go on, Mr. Randle," said Tommy.

Peter turned toward Salazar.

You asked me a minute ago, Mr. Salazar, how this happened to be any affair of mine. I'll tell you why. Josie Brant asked me to see you in her behalf. Because Josie Brant has made it my affair-because when a woman gives herself to a man under a promise of marriage he also gives himself to her. A marriage by nature is a marriage by God. You can't get around it. Josie Brant asked you to legalize this union-'

Peter struck and struck until Salazar sank in a corner and refused to fight any more.

"Wait a minute," said Salazar coolly. And then to Tommy: "And do you mean to say that you believe all the stuff this

"Yes," said Tommy briskly, "I do."

"Without giving me a chance?" "I'm giving you that chance now."

Salazar's eyes grew a shade darker. He was, as he knew, at bay, but his situation was not hopeless by any means, for Peter, though large in bulk, was not otherwise impressive. little mind had the habit of judging by appearances. And Broadway had given him a shrewdness not to be equaled by any man who wore evening clothes that fitted as badly as Randle's did.

"All right," said Salazar coolly. "I don't know what object this man has in coming to you and telling you this stuff. I did know Josie Brant. She was a nice little thing. I took her out a few times. But if she says that she has any claim on me, if she says I promised to marry her, she's a liar-

Peter took a pace forward, clenching his fist. "See here, you—"
"Wait a minute, Mr. Randle," said Tommy. And then to
Salazar: "How long ago was it that you knew this girl?"

Salazar hesitated, then lied promptly: "Two-three years ago." "That's not true," said Tommy, "and you know it."
"Oh, no—no!" said Peter, waving his arms like flails. "I know

all about it. This winter-less than three months. There's still time to save her from disgrace if you'll marry her at once.

The elements of the speech were preposterous as proof, but they were uttered with all the spontaneity of conviction. Tommy felt their truth as she would have felt the sincerity of an ingenuous child, and to Peter's ingenuousness was added the power of his bulk and eagerness.

The attention of Salazar was so quickly focused upon Peter's

last extraordinary suggestion that he for-got the terms of the previous argument. "Marriage!" he exclaimed. And then laughed. "Marriage! Is this a joke?" Peter stared at him.

"A joke? Do I look as though I were making a joke? I said marriage. That's what I mean. Marriage to Josie Brantat once. If you're a man, you'll do the square thing. If you don't-well-I'll-

I'll see about that.

Salazar glanced from one to the other, looking Peter impudently up and down. He had, like most of his kind, the very slightest elements of stability or of character. What unnerved him most was the thought of his pose, his swagger, his perfections falling to pieces before Tommy's eyes. The expression of conviction on Tommy's face made him desperate.

"You've done some talking, Mr. Randle." he said craftily. "Maybe you'll answer a question or two of mine. What's Josie Brant doing in your house? How did she get there, and why? That's what I'd like to know. You say she came to you and told you this story. Well, suppose I admit I knew the girl—that doesn't let you out. I guess you're not as crazy as you look. You've got a game of your own to play. It's a pretty old game to try to work on me, and it wont do. You want me to marry this little-you want me to marry Josie Brant, so that you wont have to.

THIS sudden attack from such an angle was so amazing to Peter that he stood for a moment staring. What he most wanted to do was to strike. But he was still conscious of the girl at his

elbow, who was listening so intently.
"Why—see here—you!" he gasped. "I took her in my house because she had no place to go. She's nothing to me. You're what she wants. You ought to know it. That's a filthy idea of yours. You need a thrashing, by God—"
Peter had lost all sense of his sur-

roundings and only saw the pale, regular

features within reach of his arms. He took a pace forward, but Tommy quickly stepped in front of him, seizing his arm.
"Mr. Randle! Stop! Do you hear?"

Peter paused, still glaring, aware of Tommy's hands holding him. But he spoke, again dominant—as though in his own house: "Well, then, you get out of here," he gasped. "Get out quick. 'ye hear?"

Salazar had recovered his poise and smiled. "Miss Keith-" he began, when Tommy spoke quickly, convincingly:
"Yes, go! That's right. Go. I'm sick of you."
Salazar stared at her. "Do you mean that?"

"Yes. Yes! Go!"

"I hope when you've had time to think this over-"

"Wont you go!

Salazar frowned, smiled and then shrugged a shoulder. "Oh. very well—if you mean it—" Tommy made no reply, and he turned slowly toward the door. It was far from an imposing exit, and yet he made it with a kind of grace.

She did not look away from Salazar until he disappeared. She stood, curiously enough, still holding Peter's arm and hand, until the door into the outer corridor closed. At the sound of the closing door, Tommy tittered nervously. Peter looked down at her. Why should she be laughing now? She still held his arm

with both hands as though she thought he might be preparing to follow Salazar into the corridor. She seemed smaller than he thought she was—almost as small as Josie, almost as unhappy. "I—I'm sorry," he blurted out. "But you see—"

His voice broke the spell of abstraction, and she released his

arm, moving away.

"Yes-I understand."

Her head had drooped a little. Her hair was the color of the fall grasses shining in the sun. She did not have the appearance of the gay creature he had met at Jimmy Blake's. A drooping moss rose! Her head came up quickly.

"I guess you'd better go too, Mr. Randle," she said. Peter straightened. "Oh, yes, of course," he said, and turned Then as though he had forgotten something, he toward the door. turned back and held out his hand.

"I-I hope you're not angry with me," he said gently. She glanced up at him, her eyes as hard and bright as b.own

agates.

"No-no, not angry."

She looked down at his hand. It was large, brown and caloused, like a workingman's.

"I-I'm afraid I-I've made an awful mess of things-for you -for Josie-for everybody."

"For me? I-

She pressed his hand, then released it, turning quickly away. -I'm glad you came. But you'd better go now. Good-by.

Something was wrong with her voice. He stared for a moment. Was she going to cry? The thought of that alarmed him, and he made quickly for the door.

Chapter Five

UNABLE to restrain her curiosity, Lola called at the Ritz early the following afternoon. Tommy was out. She waited, and to improve the passing moments assiduously pumped Lucette, Tommy's French maid, learning of the arrival of John Salazar the night before upon the scene, where loud words had been spoken by the tall stranger, who at last had actually ordered "ce beau Monsieur Salazar" from the apartment of Mademoiselle. It was épatant that a stranger should make so free of the apartment that Mademoiselle should permit that ce beau Monsieur Salazar should go.

But there it was, enfin, exactly what had happened. Was Made-moiselle désolée? She did not know anything more, except that Mademoiselle was impatient and very, very cross when Lucette

had attempted to brush her hair.

Lola waited at the Ritz for an hour, but Tommy did not return. It was quite clear that Lola's expedient, born in a moment of inspiration and mischief, had been successful beyond all hope. Jack Salazar had been dismissed; and Peter Randle, instead of having been thrown by Tommy down the elevator-shaft, had emerged from the interview both unscathed and triumphant. Ex-There might be something to this "absent-minded that had escaped Lola's notice. She had had some doubts as to her own part in the affair, for her telephone conversation had taken place without Fred Wingate's knowledge or connivance, but the results having justified the means, she was now quite ready to tell Wingate everything. So instead of going to her apartment, she rang up Lablache, the picture-dealer on Fifth Avenue in whose gallery Wingate was sometimes to be found, and together they walked uptown to Wingate's hotel.

Before confessing, she asked Wingate a few questions. Randle, it appeared, had returned to the hotel very late. He had worn a thoughtful expression, but beyond the statement that he had gone for a long walk through the Park, had had nothing to say. He and Wingate had taken a drink of Scotch in Wingate's room, and then Peter had gone to bed at once. But he had left the hotel in the morning, and had not returned. Then Lola told what she had found out at the Ritz, confessing her guilt and

marveling at the success of the stratagem.

"I've got to take my hat off to your friend," she said, laughing. "I used to think I could size up a fellow by the way he did his parlor tricks, but I guess I must be getting feeble-minded or something. Peter Randle certainly put it over. And anybody who could put the skids under Salazar in Tommy's own apartment with Tommy looking on-well, he's just a kind of combination Machiavelli and cave-man."

Wingate could not help smiling at the thought of Peter Randle with the qualities of either-and yet there seemed no doubt that

his evidence and arouments had been convincing.

"I told you that Peter was stubborn in his convictions," he said. "Peter's convictions aren't always your convictions or mine, and they're pretty sure as a rule to be unconventional-but he had the right on his side in this, and he made Tommy see it.

They paused a moment for the traffic of the cross-street. 'Now that I know what happened last night, I'm afraid he's following the thing up. You can't tell just what he'll do.'

"Well," said Lola as they reached the hotel, "I wouldn't be surprised if he'd kidnaped Jack and taken him to Red Bridge in a taxi. Short of murder, that would be about the only thing that would satisfy him, I'd say.

Wingate frowned as Lola paused at the entrance, laughing. don't think this is a joke," he said. "He's done all he can do. Of course, he can't make Salazar marry the girl. I'd better be getting him out of town as soon as possible. Wont you come in? We can have some tea. And I'll just ring up his room and see if he's come back."

IT was on the way to the tea-room that they met Peter making his way to the elevators. He did not see them, being very intent upon his own affairs. But he was attracting a good deal of attention, for his collar was torn and his hat crushed, his face was swollen, and he had one black eye.

Wingate seized him by the arm and guided him into a small unoccupied parlor close at hand, Lola following. Wingate noticed that he gave her his left hand, but that his smile, though gro-

tesque, was very sweet.

"How the devil did you get into this sort of shape, Peter?" asked Wingate.

"Oh, it's nothing-er-nothing at all," Peter stammered, gring like a boy. "I was just going up to my room to dress.
But you're hurt." ning like a boy.

"Am I?" he asked. "Oh-my hand, yes. I-er-barked my knuckles on the-er-door of a taxi.'

"Did the door of the taxi punch you in the eye too?"

"Er-no. I wasn't aware-

"And your hat?

Peter examined it with an air of abstraction, his thoughts else-

"When are you going back to Red Bridge?" he asked with abrupt simplicity.

Wingate's look was quizzical.

"I think we'd better both be going back in the morning," he

'Yes. I think that will be all right," said Peter, nodding slowly Lola, intensely interested, listened to this conversation but could find no words to fit the situation. There was something about Peter Randle's manner, an air of composure, in spite of his injuries, that gave her a definite impression that he had spent a satisfactory afternoon. Her curiosity was again intense, but she saw no way to gratify it unless she questioned him. This seemed impossible. As Wingate had said, Peter had his dignity, and Lola was now rather surprisingly aware of it.

After a moment, very politely, he made his excuses and left

them staring after him.
"Well, I'm damned!" said Wingate with a grin.

"You've got to find out about this for me, Fred," Lola insisted eagerly. "You'd better go up. He may need something. 'Yes, perhaps. But I wonder what John Salazar needs."

"You think-

Wingate made a grim smile, and then spoke cryptically: "Peter hasn't been chopping wood for three years for nothing," he said.

BUT it was not until some weeks later when Wingate visited New York again, that Lola learned just what had happened that afternoon. Peter had been very reticent before leaving New York, and only after he had been in Red Bridge for a week had Wingate succeeded in getting an idea of the affair. It did not seem to be a matter of which Peter was proud, for having failed in the object of his visit to New York, which was to make Salazar see his duty to Josie as Peter saw it, the personal encounter with Salazar had only served to accentuate that failure. He had not wanted to discuss it with anyone, but Wingate's interest and sympathy seemed to be so real that Peter at last answered his questions.

Peter, having called at Salazar's office many times, had at last been successful in finding his man. Peter had begun talking at once, in the presence of a number of people. Salazar had been angry at this invasion, but was wise enough to comprehend that an airing of his personal affairs could do him no possible good in the office or elsewhere. He had therefore accepted Peter's suggestion that they go out to some quiet (Continued on page 148)

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from

Ruth Comfort Mitchell

Los Gatos, California. where Ruth Comfort Mitchell lives in a beautiful hacienda, is not so far from Hollywood but that she visits that capital of Cellulodia on occasion. The present story is the concrete result of one such visit recently made, where she met the heroine. and on a basis of certain of that remarkable young person's professional adventures, designed the pattern of her story. Another story by Ruth Mitchell will be published in an early issue.

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action. "Bring me the blood and tears!" he snarled.

Illustrated by T. D. Skidmore

E BLANC had come on from Hollywood for a conference with the New York office. The New York office was highly pleased and satisfied with him, but he was not highly pleased and satisfied with himself, because he had failed in a certain small and unimportant matter whereof he had made loud boast-because he was to lose a bet.

Snap out of it, old son," advised his Eastern confrère, studying his fretted face. "With all of California and the wide world for location, why need you sob yourself to sleep because one garden gate is locked against you? It's unimportant."

"It is not unimportant. I tell you, it's getting on my nerves. They've made a fool of me, those old women!"

"Well, since the young women haven't-

"The comedy has gone out of it completely, Eddie," the man from the West interrupted sharply. "I know I'm an ass to let

it get me this way, but it does. Everybody rags me about it. Can't put my head into a club or a restaurant without-'How about the taking of Gibraltar?'- When do the walls of Jericho fall?' I tell you, I'm fed up on it. I-it's got me going. It rides me.

The other man grew thoughtful. "I can see it does," he said patiently. He knew Le Blanc: one of the greatest directors in the business, who would have been the greatest, but for the curious little twist in his mentality which was being manifested now. Because a certain patrician old home in Hollywood had barred its doors and locked its gates against the picture people after he had advertised his intention of shooting the veranda and garden scenes of "An Old-fashioned Rose" there, he had lost interest in everything else; he was actually neglecting a new production while he evolved schemes for outwitting the five old-maid

sisters who had filled up the moat and hoisted the drawbridge. The biggest picture of his career, the biggest picture his company had ever attempted, was waiting, and it would continue to wait until he had made good his boast. And there wasn't another director—for all Le Blanc's irritating weakness—to whom it could be intrusted. The chief sighed.

"All right, Vic. If you feel that way about it, I guess we'll have to figure on helping you out. Now, then, let me get this right: 'Gibraltar' is owned by five old-maid sisters? No men

in the family?"

"There'll be one next month, I understand. Kid brother—child of the old man's second marriage—is coming home. The cub's been kept away for nine years—prep-school, college, a year abroad—so that he should not be polluted by our nasty nearness. But—"

"He's never been back to Hollywood since he was a child?" The other put his question crisply, and Le Blanc shook his head. "He knows nothing of the picture game, of picture people? Gad, I've got it, Vic! The boy makes it simple." He pressed a button. "Get Ann Trevenna. Tell her I want her, and to make it snappy."

"What's the big idea?" Le Blanc wanted to know.
"Big idea is right. You wait."

Who's Ann Trevenna? Never heard of her."

"Of course you haven't — that's part of her usefulness. I don't know who she is, no-body does. Heard somewhere that her father was Welsh and her mother French; mother's still living—invalid. Girl's

been educated, lived abroad, never picks up the entrée fork for the lemonade hook—get me? She can go anywhere and get anything—do anything and be anything."

"Your thought is that she can get round the cub brother? Easy to look

at?"

"Well, now, listen: She's the kind of girl you don't ordinarily give a second look, but if by any chance you do, you keep right on looking, if you know what I mean."

Ann Trevenna arrived

—a s mall, dark girl,
rather colorless, and content to remain so, apparently; and she was very

young.

The chief greeted her with enthusiasm and cordiality, but she regarded him warily, taking a chair in a tentative fashion. "Lo, Eddie. What is it this time? Second-story

job?"

Le Blanc, taking his second look, decided that there was something rather bleak about her little face, bleak and—ruthless. The curve of her nostril, perhaps—hawklike, by gad; that was the word, in spite of

a babyish mouth. When she sat back in her chair, her feet swung clear of the floor, and that gave her a look of added youngness. She was young; if she was more than twenty, he could make a watch. But she looked like the sort of child who had never for an instant believed in Santa Claus.

"Now then," the Eastern man was saying breezily, "Vic, here, has a little problem that I figure you can solve for him, so we'll all just slip down the street and have a bite of lunch while—"

The girl rudely interrupted. "I ate yesterday," she said coldly. Then, folding her small gloved hands in her lap, she looked at the director from Hollywood. "Shoot!" she said succinctly.

"IT is understood, then?" Miss Preston faced her four sisters. "Carey returns on the fourteenth; his twenty-fourth birthday occurs on the fourteenth of April, two months later. Until that time, without a cloud to mar it, the care-free, happy boyhood which we promised his mother we would give him, shall continue."

The Misses Deborah, Dorcas, Ruth and Naomi looked anxiously and unhappily at each other, but it was only Deborah who ventured a protest. "You don't think, sister, that—all things considered—he himself would wish to—"

"I don't think," Rachel Preston made answer silkily, "that we care-or dare to disregard a deathbed charge."

Le Blanc, who in his darker moments called Preston House, deep in its walled garden, "Gi-braltar," and "Jeri-cho" when he felt a lightening of the spirit, had a name likewise for the five spinster sisters. He called them, because of their dedication to the ashes of their fathers and the temples of their gods, the "Vestal Virgins," but a more fanciful observer might have l.kened them to altar candles in their waxen pallor and cold purity, candles of different lengths, of varying terms of service. Some would still shine brightly

for a long time to come, and some were beginning to flicker gently, and there was one which was guttering feebly which would soon be out.

Carey Preston was shocked when he saw his eldest half-sister. It was nine years since he had been at home, but the Misses Preston had gone on, each in her turn, to spend the holidays with him in the East, and it was five years since he had seen Miss Rachel.

When he voiced a modified version of his thought that she was alarmingly aged and changed, she cut him crisply short.

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"I am quite as well, my dear Carey, as I have any occasion to be!" The remark was entirely characteristic of her. She was as well as she had any occasion to be, living her genteel and cloistered life: bounding exuberance of health would be of no use to her whatever; there was nothing she wanted to do with it.





"Z'ere are two s'ings for me, monsieur. One is-not possible; ze ozzer is-ze river!"

He remarked other changes as well. There were no horses; the victoria and brougham stood idle and dusty; and only one ancient negro was retained for all the work of Preston House, indoors and out.

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"Ah, yes," sighed a sister in explanation, "our good old Cindy died,—we wrote you,—and young Manda married, and young Jake went off to be a chauffeur, and we have dreaded replacing them. You have not the faintest conception of the servant problem here in Hollywood since the demoralizing influence of these motion picture—Bacchanalians! As to the horses? You remember the splendid bays? Well, dear old Major dropped dead in his stall, and Captain suffered so pitifully with stiff joints that we were obliged to have him put out of his misery. And since then—we couldn't find it in our hearts to put other animals in their places."

The young brother looked rather blank. "I see. But-how

about putting a car in their place?"

That made them actually wince. "Dear Carey," one of them said, "we have always felt that not having a car placed us definitely as belonging to another era, another order—to the Hollywood of tradition. It—you see, Carey, we feel that it rather sets us apart."

It rather set him apart, the youth reflected grimly, fighting precariously for a foothold on a jammed street-car. Trying to get about in Hollywood and Los Angeles without one's own motor was like having both legs off at the hip. It was quaint of the old dears, but it was a quaintness he should not emulate when he came into his property. He was a ceaselessly sunny creature, and he decided to keep the soft pedal on and play "Cranford" with the sisters until his birthday. Little enough to do, after nine years!

And his half-sisters did make him amazingly comfortable; the house was exquisitely kept, and some one among them got up-delectable meals which old black Simon served solemnly and perfectly. Rachel, the eldest, was failing rapidly; the other sisters shielded her from everything. Deborah and Dorcas attended to the household, and Ruth and Naomi, the youngest ones, went out a great deal with little silken bags of fine needlework on their arms to spend long days with old family friends. Sometimes they went several days in succession, and the young brother was sufficiently curious to comment.

"You see, Carey dear," they explained, "some of us must maintain the Preston place in the social world—the real Los Angeles, the real Hollywood. It brightens dear Rachel to have news of her

friends, and they understand perfectly that Preston House cannot entertain at present on account of her delicate health."

So Carey Preston set himself patiently to play the game of patience, but he found it slow going. He had been nine years away at Eastern schools and colleges; he had no friends in the West of his own generation. He loved and respected his halfsisters; they were not comedy old maids at all, for they did not simper or chatter or speak of them-selves as "we girls;" they were not comic valentines but steel engravings. Nevertheless he found the days and evenings of the early, languid, enervating spring crawling like sleepy snails across the relentless calendar.

'Good gad!" he exploded once to himself, dashing out of the dim house into the walled garden and pacing violently up and down its prim paths. "This is the deuce of a life for an able-bodied man! I feel like a female impersonator! I shall find myself crocheting, presently!"

Old Simon came feebly

forth to tell him he was wanted on the telephone. It was a young chap with whom he had struck up a cordial and enthusiastic friendship on the train coming across the continent, one Jimmy Finley, who reported himself as hopping into his car and beating it right over to see him.

Twenty minutes later Finley found Carey Preston waiting for him outside the locked iron gate, hotly and unhappily embarrassed. "I-I hardly know how to tell you, old man," he said, "but the fact is, I can't ask you in. I could say that it's because my eldest sister is ill, and she is ill, but that would only explain this one occasion, and the next time-I may as well tell you, straight from the shoulder, that I'll never be able to ask you in.'

"Why the Ali Baba stuff?" Finley wanted bluntly to know, staring. He was a gay and graceless young person without reverence or final g's. "What are you doin' in there? Bootleggin'?"
Carey shook his head. "We'll go down to the

Boulevard and find a quiet café and I'll tell you the whole story.

They found the quietest corner in a noisy res-

taurant, and he set himself manfully to the task of explanation. "I told my sisters you were coming, and they asked who you were, and I said you were connected with the business end of some motion-picture firm. Well! By gad, you know, it's so ridiculous that it's positively sublime! It's the most abnormal hatred-why, they've simply dedicated their lives to keeping you people off the sacred premises of Preston House, as if they were defending a city from invaders or guarding a temple from spoilers. They think they are! Of course, I know it's company to you and it is to me in a way, but—" He broke off, comedy to you, and it is to me in a way, but-" "It's my house, too, of course, and I shouldn't stand

for such foolishness if they weren't so old and frail and—"
"But look here!" said Finley. "You're a kid, and your sisters are old women! How come?"



"Why, you see, they're half-sisters, and for a fact, they seem like mothers or aunts. Rachel seems like a grandmother. My dad married very young, the first time, and had these five daughters, and then, when he was pretty old, he married againmy mother. She was only seventeen; he was her guardian, and she'd been sent out to him from Kentucky. I guess she was scared or homesick, or something. Well, he died in less than a year, and my mother only lived two or three days after I was born. She left me to the sisters, and I guess they've told me a thousand times that she made them promise to give me 'a happy and care-free boyhood.' And they've delivered the goods! Good Lord, if there's anything I haven't had, it was only because they didn't know I wanted it!

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"Funny thing was, they adored Mother. Expect 'em to be jealous, wouldn't you? She was ten years younger than the youngest of 'em, and yet ladies would come to call and send in cards for 'Mrs. Preston and the young ladies.' Well, you see, they've devoted twenty-four years to me, and I figure I can devote two months to them. After my birthday, when I take charge of my own affairs, it'll be different, of course."

Carey charged blindly at Le Blanc, at the camera-man.

> "And then what are you goin' to do? I mean, are you an Idle Rich or a Laborin' Class? Goin' to just sit in the well-and-favorably-known rose-garden and play Lotto with the dear old

daguerreotypes or are you-

Carey grinned. Frankly, he hardly knew. The sisters refused to talk business before the appointed time, but he knew his mother had left him a fortune. Of course, his education and travel had cost a dizzy sum, but still there should be enough, and he would look round for interesting and congenial occupation.

Well, there's a piece of easy change waitin' to be picked up whenever you can park the Defenders downtown long enough to let Le Blanc-he's our biggest director-get into Gibraltar (that's what we call your plant, you know!) and take a few shots of that rose-garden.

The other shook his head. "Couldn't do it, old man. Le Blanc? Yes, that's the name. They told me there was one of the vandals

in particular who had harried them ceaselessly."

I'll say he has! Vic has a bet up on it, you see, and he's the world's worst loser. There's nothing he wouldn't pay, and," he added, regarding his new friend seriously for an instant, "-now get me straight on this-there's nothing he wouldn't do, to put it over."

Well, short of razing the wall,"-young Carey laughed,-"I think the gentleman will have to lose his wager."

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"He hasn't lost it yet," said Jimmy Finley.

After that evening of brisk and modern converse, the delicate

days at Preston House palled the more.
"We thought, dear Carey," said Miss Rachel gently, "that you might care to keep up your French—" And, "Ah, yes," said another, "the fascination of another language-

But the only other language which fascinated their young brother at the moment was the crude and vigorous one spoken by Jimmy Finley and his kind, and when he met up with him one forenoon, he followed him without protest into the camp of the enemy. If only he didn't run into Deborah and Dorcas on their way to market, or Ruth and Naomi, setting forth for an all-day visit to maintain the family traditions!

He was immensely intrigued by the world of motley and make-believe. Finley took him "all over the lot," as he called it, from set to set, where these modern mummers, with ghastly daubs of

paint on their faces, were making pictures. His guide left him, presently, and he stayed on, gliding heedlessly through the luncheon hour, wandering from the boudoir of a king's mistress to a saloon in a '49 mining-camp, from a dressing-station just behind the trenches to the underground den of Parisian Apaches. Never had he been so entertained since he put by his "Arabian Nights!" The thing was enchanting, the most amazing fusion of grown-

up-ness and childhood, work that was play and play that was work! They were so intent, so busy, so absorbed, but it was the busyness of children; there was an endearing quality in it. "Let's pretend!" they said to each other, the nervous, high-keyed directors in riding clothes, the impossibly pretty girls, the wounded soldiers, the French cutthroats.

Was this gay carnival actually a solid commercial thing? He put the question to himself, marveling. Was this lighthearted fiesta taking its place among the half-dozen greatest industries in the

world?

Jimmy Finley rushed back to him, re-orsefully. "Sorry, old thing! Got morsefully. sewed up and forgot you! Been trailin' you all over the lot." He had found him watching the war picture, and darted into a group and out again with a director at his heels.

"This is Victor Le Blanc, that's got 'em all backed into a siding," he said; and: "Vic, shake hands with Mr. Preston, the White Hope of Gibraltar!"

Le Blanc said frankly that he wanted to talk a little business to Mr. Preston, and Mr. Preston said regretfully and cordially-with the dazzle of the great lights in his eyes and the glamour of it all in his spirit—that he was frightfully sorry.

but he was afraid there wasn't any use in going into the matter of making pictures within the walled garden of Preston House. The director grew eloquent and ardent, but when the youth, for all his wide-eyed wonder, remained inflexible, a sudden wintry gieam came into Le Blanc's expression.

"Very well, then," he said, the words close-clipped, "we understand each other. Your refusal is final?"

"It's final," said young Carey, recalling for a fleeting instant Jimmy Finley's remark in the Boulevard café: "There's nothing he wouldn't pay, and nothing he wouldn't do, to put it over."
"All right," said Le Blanc briskly, and with a complete change

of manner, holding out a lean hand. "Glad to have met you. Make yourself at home here, wont you? Now, if you'll pardon me—" He stepped swiftly back into his set, and his voice came crisply:

"Ready, Peggy? Ready, Mr. Martin? Ready, cameras? Wait a minute! Where's that damn' music?"

A prop-boy dashed off and came back at a run with a violinist in tow. She was a sallow young woman with streaks of gray in her hair, and she tucked her fiddle under her chin, at a sharp word from Le Blanc, and began to play the "Meditation" from Thais" with melting sweetness, and the scene went forward.

This, Carey Preston told himself, was the maddest jingling of fool's bells in all the merry make-believe of this Land of Misrule-the frank, the positively naïve fashion in which they sought to summon up certain emotions to be worn with certain costumes, in certain settings! Harmonicas and accordions playing "Turkey in the Straw" in the barroom, a portable organ exhaling solemn sounds while the tired old mother breathed her last, the soft, insidious wail of the violin for the lovers' parting! It put the final seal of whimsy on the whole prankish enterprise.

Le Blanc held up the action. The Peggy person, playing a

Le Blanc held up the action. The Peggy person, playing a nurse, did not suit him. He called upon the world in general to look at the impossible fashion in which some one had daubed her apron with gore, and then, his irate eyes traveling upward, he found petulant fault with her make-up. It was only too clear, he stated bitterly, that he, supposed to be in charge of large affairs, must encumber himself with the smallest details.

"Bring me the blood and tears!" he snarled.

The two fluids were hastily fetched, and a clean apron; and Carey, hovering in the background where the musician padded nervously to and fro, plucking at the (Continued on page 135)

HERE is the third of the new stories the greatest living novelist employing the English language is writing for you—tales of men and women in crises of their lives. No short story recently published has been so widely commented upon as "The Mummy," which appeared in a recent issue; and here again he has presented a remarkable human study And the curious thing about this story is that behind the two women the man appears more sharp!y defined than they. That is the Galsworthy art.

The



John Galsworthy

MRS. MORRISEY had been waiting all the afternoon in the garden of her second-class Madeira hotel; and her face showed it. Her make-up, unevenly renewed from her vanity bag, very partially concealed the finger-prints of Time-and her age was forty-six, if computed from the nineteen years recorded to Florence Pritt on her first marriage certificate. She looked almost haggard in the shade of the big center palm tree, quite haggard when she moved out to the terrace in the sunlight. Considering that her future hung perhaps by the hair of her looks when he came,-if he came,-this was proof enough of the strain she was undergoing. From the terrace she could see, across the little coast gap, the garden of the first-class Madeira hotel, where he and his wife were staying-its palms and terraces and masses of bougainvillæa. She could see the liner for Brazil lying in Funchal harbor. She could see the window of her own bedroom, where her trunks were packed; and the wide blue sea whereon she was-or was not-going to become Mrs. Ted Cordew on her way to peace.

And still he did not come! With her vivid coloring,—black hair, red spots in her cheeks, tightened red lips, dark restless eyes, -with her tall, sharpened figure and quick movements, she resembled one of those strelitza flowers which grew in the hotel garden, orange and bright blue, spiky, and tethered, as it were, like restive birds to their tall plant perches.

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Old campaigner though she was, Flo Morrisey suffered, wondering whether Ted Cordew was coming to the scratch. She was "up against it." Married at nineteen, divorced at twenty-three; married again at twenty-seven, widowed at thirty-six; protected and not protected, as the case might be, ever since, she had lived precariously on her looks; and her looks were running out. She always faced things, even her own face. Every morning, every evening, its inexorable progress confronted her, and she made the

best of it. But was the best good enough, any longer?

Her last "protection" at an end, with but fifty pounds in her bank, she had taken winter passage for Madeira. Those short

voyages were sometimes long enough for a good sailor like herself. So many wives kept their cabins. Young men were beyond her now, but oldish men going, for their health or their wives health, to a warm climate where there was nothing to do, were almost designed by Providence. Colonel Cordew, clearly a good sailor, well-colored, bolt upright, not more than fifty; his wife older, asthmatic probably-she had marked them from the first hour on board, their name, destination, table. The whole thing was in the table. For four days Colonel Cordew would eat, and Mrs. Cordew wouldn't-there was a wind! Not Chance, then, arranged the necessary propinquity in that corner of the dining saloon, and the chairs alongside on the lee deck. Flo Morrisey believed in Chance, but left nothing to it. Three meals a day, and no one on his other side, a fund of mutual experience, Egypt, Burma, Monte Carlo, Epsom, winter sports and Capetown, a slight acquaintance in the Boer War with the late Morrisey. And the weather warmer and warmer, with the blood-releasing blessedness of south-going ships. And such a decent fellow, Ted Cor-dew—so that at each meal a little wrinkle vanished from round her lips or eyes, and at night in the shaded light of a lee corner, she looked almost as she had looked when she went out to India with her first husband twenty-seven years ago. . .

Staring with her keen, dark eyes across at his hotel, she re-membered with a sort of fluttering in her heart their first early morning glimpse of the lovely island-she in a nightdress and

long cloak, he in pajamas and a Norfolk jacket-an impromptu meeting by the bulwarkthoughtfully devised. The scent of fertility, and the low sunshine touching the green slopes, and his cheery voice: "Well, it's been a rattling jolly voyage, thanks to you!' And the long look she had given him, and the touch, as if unconscious, of her hand on his sleeve-almost more than calculation in it, even then.

Then, in the shore boat, landing, the introduction to his wife. How much thought beforehand, lying awake in her berth, had she not given to the question—to know or not to know! She had aspired, at first, to nothing more than a little secret protection and her bills paid. But the whole thing had been unexpected and ironical; and now, strained by this waiting in the bright garden, she could see why. once she had not quite kept her head

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or was it her heart? A secret something-ambition, aspiration, what not-had bunkered all her cool designing, so that she had not as yet grasped the real, in hope of the ideal. Instead of his secret companion, she had become their open friend. Fatality—trium-phant, or tragic? Which? She had made Ted Cordew love her; she had been made almost to love Ted Cordew. She was not his companion; he had not paid her bills-she hadn't a stiver left; but he was on the edge of the grand écart, and it depended on these next few

hours whether he would take it, and she would step with him into a new life out of an existence hard, unlovely, anxious as

A frog croaked in the artificial fern-pool; a cicada chirped like a little bird-the sun was going west! Soon it would pass behind

his hotel garden and go down.

When are we going

for that little moun-

And she must wait! What was going on there? How had he put it to his wife? Had he put it at all, or had his courage failed? Men were so damned so't-at least, decent men! That wife of his-she had money, she had people! And if he hesitated at putting her in his wife's place on board that boat,-men had such odd scruples, good form and all the rest!-why, she would go second, steerage even, to get out of this, away to a new world, a new life, with him! She put her hands up to her head; the back of her neck was burning hot; her palms were hot-everything hot. She bethought herself suddenly of that blue network head-kerchief in which she looked so "bewitching"-or so he said; and hurrying in, she crossed to her room on the ground floor. An old American smoking a cigar looked up from his chair as she passed:



decent of you."

MR. BRUBAKER, another man and an editor were discussing "the younger generation" one day. What the other man said wasn't complimentary, but Mr. Brubaker observed: "They're a nice lot after all; roll their own more'n we old fogies like, sometimes, butfor instance, I know one of 'em-Connie, her name is-" And then he told the tales of Connie that now you're reading here.



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 B_{ν} Howard Brubaker

Illustrated by Edward Ryan

I T was Saturday afternoon in October; the gas-engine had found relief from its hacking cough; the Sentinel was off the press; the tardiest carrier-boy had been scolded and sent on his way; Dominick had gone to the post office with the mail-and Connie's week was over. Editor Beckwith, a damp copy of the little daily before him, was checking over the ads and marking down the

"Anything else before I go?"

"Better run along, Connie, before I think of something. Ghost walked?"

"Yes—I got mine. See how guilty I look?"
Old Beckwith marked "\$1.75" in blue pencil on an item and looked at what he called his "reportorial and business staff of

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nineteen"-a small, dark, bobbed-haired staff whose passable substitute for beauty consisted of eyes dancing with vitality and a face made for easy laughter.

"The flush of shame is becoming to you—that's why."
"No, honestly," Connie chuckled, "it's a shame to take the money. Getting paid for having the time of my life and poking my nose into everybody's business.

"Let's see-how long have you been here?"

"Four weeks."

"Well,-if you must know,-it's been the best month in our You've brightened up the paper already; you've changed Dominick from a stationary to a movable wop, and you've shaken some dust off the old man. What do I want for fifteen a week?"



"You're a nice boss to say that. Of course I feel that I'm only pinch-hitting for Luke Witherspoon. When he comes back from college for his summer vacation, of course he must have his job back.'

"Let's cross that bridge when we come to it. Maybe by that time we shall need a staff of two-Branchville's fastest growing

daily paper."

Which nobody can deny," chanted Conniefor the Sentinel was the only paper printed in town. But since "Becky Sharp" was in such good humor, "What is the paper going to do about Cleve Pickett's real-estate scheme?" she asked. "Climb a good, safe,

comfortable tree and watch the fight. We can't take sides in a hot local issue like that; we'd lose circulation and advertis-

ing either way."
"I should think we would decide what is r-right and r-root for Connie's initial "r's" always gave her the most trouble when she tried to be impressive.

"How that carries one back!" There was a wistful look in the veteran editor's eyes. "No, Connie, the foundation-stone of success in country journalism is a consistent and unyielding cowardice. know how that tired old editor felt-out in Kansas, wasn't it?-when he said the only thing he could safely attack in his paper was a man-eating shark."

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"I rather favor Cleve's scheme myself," said Con-"Don't you?

"On the contrary, I rather oppose it."

The girl was silent for a moment.
"It breaks up families," pursued Beckwith; then he made peace overtures. "There's a good deal of merit on both sides."

"And," conceded Connie, "a good deal of foolishness. It interests people, though. I should think we'd-"

"Oh, sure. We must print all we can get-both sides. Interviews, letters, debates.

"Surrebutters-that's a good word."

"Yes. enough." We'll be a public forum-that's safe

"And who," she asked, "is the r-rising young journalist who is going out next week and stir up the animals and get good copy?"
"Go to it," said Beckwith.

All this hullabaloo that had come upon Branchville resulted from what Connie called "a lot of pretty sloppy work back in the Glacial Period." This recent high-school graduate still had some geology in her system; and the situation, as she saw it, was as follows: When the ice-cap came down and gouged out a place for Branchville to stand, it left a high, steep ridge back of Independence Avenue. Probably the rock was too hard to grind up easily, so the Glacial Period, when nobody was looking, skimped its work, and that was a low trick to play on us. Over beyond this ridge was Poplar Pocket. The melting ice found one soft spot and dug out a narrow valley through which even today a small stream flows.

Some fifty thousand years later, along came a bunch of forefathers and built their houses in the shelter of the ridge, all close together and sociable,

and started the principal residence thoroughfare of Branchville-King Street for a hundred years, then Independence Avenue when kings went out of style. One of these old boys was named Nutley, and he picked out a nice place beside the creek, and in the course of time built there a lovely Colonial house. Long years afterward there lived in that house the famous Patience Nutley, who



The hymnwrote church hymns popular half a century ago. writing lady was Branchville's sole claim to national fame.
"Patience," said Connie, "is the only thing that ever happened

to Branchville except weather.

Now, in the days of the bobbed-haired little Constance Lambert, rising young journalist and professional nose-poker, the town had used up all the bumpy space between the high ridge and the river, and it said to itself: "Where do we go from here?" It had already stretched up and down the State Road until it

looked like a string of sausages.

In answer to this question, Cleveland Pickett proposed a big real-estate development beyond the ridge, where he would construct, in the poetic "realtor" language, "Happy Nests for Happy People." Poplar Pocket was, as the crow flies, "close to the great throbbing heart of Branchville"—meaning such things as stores, movies and the railroad station. But though they were to live in happy nests, these happy people were not birds. needed a road. Poplar Pocket had plenty of back doors leading to nowhere in particular, but only one front entrance, and squarely in the middle of it sat the fine old historic Nutley homestead, now occupied by Hannah Nutley, sole survivor of the line. There was no other way into the valley, save a long, hilly, heartbreaking road. Between the Glacial Period and old Pa Nutley, Poplar Pocket was corked up like a bottle.

Cleve had outside capital for his project, and he had personally secured options on much of the cheap acreage back in the hinterland. All he asked was that the city institute condemnation proceedings against the old homestead, pay Miss Nutley a fair price, tear down the house and open a street into the valley-all in the interest of progress, better housing conditions, bigger tax lists, increased business for merchants, and an onward and upward

movement of Cleve's bank account.

This simple little request turned Branchville into an armed camp. It arrayed class against class, children against parents, the religious against the heathenish, sentimentalists against materialists, antiquarians against modernists. Some of the councilmen were openly "pro;" others were "anti." The balance of power, including His Honor the Mayor, still sat on the fence with their ears to the ground.

"Which," said Connie, "is a good trick if you can do it."

This she said to the important Cleve himself, who was honoring the Lambert home with a Saturday-night call-a big, good-looking, affable young barbarian whose hobby since boyhood had been collecting dollars. During his brief career he had stuck his finger into a number of pies and had invariably extracted a plum.

Cleve was cold and calculating in money matters, inclined to 'strictly just' bargains, and not excessively popular with the lower brackets of taxpayers; yet there had never been any shadow

of dishonesty over his doings.

"Mr. Beckwith says you'll end up by holding a mortgage on every building on the Hump," Connie told him—"the Hump" being her own name for the Main Street hill upon which the town's business houses stood. "From what I can see, some of those buildings have nothing to hold 'em up except mortgages, anyway.

"I'm pretty deep in this thing, Connie. If it goes through, I'll

be sitting pretty, but if it doesn't-

'Got all your money in Poplar Pocket?" "Well, it means a good deal to me."

"I suppose all the baldheaded row will be against you?" Thus the impudent young thing referred to the solid old families on Independence Avenue. "Still, it is the only beautiful street in town.

"I haven't anything against it. I'm only working for a better y. You know my motto: 'Be for Branchville.'"

"Branchville-sometimes I think it's a very appropriate name for our place.'

"Yes, the two rivers and the railroad junction and all."

"No, I mean that a town as ugly as Branchville should have such an ugly name. Excuse it, please. Forgot I was speaking to a real-estatesman."

"That's all right. We must do something about that. slogan." His mental machinery creaked and groaned for a moment, and finally ground out: "Branchville the Beautiful."
"That'll fix it up. Glad you mentioned it. We strive to please."

When Connie recovered, she got down to business.

"The paper can't come out for your plan, Cleve. The boss thinks it's safer just to print all the arguments, pro and con. So

if you have any impropaganda you'd like to put over on me-

"Don't you bother your pretty bobbed head about it."

"Cleve, you think a girl's head is just a place to grow hair. You're as much of an old fogy as those King Tuts over on Independence Avenue. You haven't even caught up to Plato-

"Plato!" Cleve jumped up from his chair and did a couple of fancy steps. "Plato-the very name for that silver-plating process we're starting over in the old tannery. Why, that's perfect!'

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"That shows the value of a lib-eral education." Connie's eyes were brimming with laughter.

Despite Cleve Pickett's reluctance to employ charming feminine heads, he could not refuse to give an interview; and the great symposium and free-for-all fight properly began with a rosy statement of how Cleve Pickett proposed to be for Branchville the Beautiful. On Sunday, Connie faithfully translated Cleve into English, and old Becky told her the next morning that it was a good start.

"Get a proof of it as quick as you can, and take it over to Mr. Holcombe. He's the head and front of the opposition."

"I knew there was a catch in it

somewhere," said Connie.

Connie was too busy that day to go home for noon refreshment, so she dropped into Wayburn's quicklunch restaurant and mentioned fried eggs to the waitress.



"You wouldn't put me out just when it's beginning to get interesting, would you? That's no way to treat a nice girl.



"Sunny side up?" inquired the waitress, who was known as Sally. "Righto.

Here Sally departed from a strict construction of her job.

That's you all over, Miss Lambert.'

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Sunny side up," thought Connie, whose favorite sport was poking fun at herself. "Little sunbeam-singing Pollyanthems. Still, there's no law against seeing the funny side of -not yet. This is a fine fight, and I've got a ringside seat. Here I was dreading my talk with old Holcombe, and he's the funniest show in town."

Before leaving the restaurant she appointed herself an Inquiring Reporter and got Sally's opinion that it was high time something

was done about working people's houses. 'It's something fierce what we gotta pay," said Sally, "for what we git.

It was said of James Madison Holcombe-with malicious exaggeration—that his clients were all in the cemetery. Whenever the past needed a defender, up bobbed Holcombe, waving the flag and his Chester A. Arthur whiskers over Branchville's glorious traditions. He lived in one of the oldest houses on Independence Avenue, and he regularly fought, bled and died for antiquity.

'I yield to none," he said to Connie in his quiet office, "in my belief in progress and prosperity, but it behooves us to preserve inviolate the precious heritage handed down to us. It behooves

("He's a great behoover," thought Connie as she took her notes.) "The spirit of '76—this materialistic age—the lack of reverence in the younger generation." For a while Mr. Holcombe viewed with alarm. "Yes, yes, yes, we have fallen upon evil days. . . . Bobbed hair, cigarette-smoking jazz fiends—the young men afraid of manual labor." (He had never done any in his life.) "On the other hand, look at that row of houses on Independence Avenue-honest, sturdy, beautiful." Mr. Holcombe was now pointing with pride, and he didn't give the old-timers the worst of it.

Connie made an honest report of the embattled lawyer's re-

marks, and let him see it before publication.
"Very good, Constance," he said. "You understand, of course, that there is nothing-ah-personal in these allusions to young people."

'Oh. sure. No offense."

"I have never-ah-entirely approved of young women taking an active part in the hurly-burly of industry-but that is another question.

"Three rousing cheers for the Glacial Period," thought Connie. "Funny thing how those men hurt their own game," she said to her kind employer. "Cleve sounded like a booster's crow, and now Mr. Holcombe comes along and tells the world that the clock stopped in 1850."

"Holcombe would have been wiser not to confuse the issue by making a wholesale attack upon the younger generation," said

Mr. Beckwith.

The argument jumped the track, and there was a spirited controversy over the manners and morals of the younger generation. For several days people talked more about the flapper problem than the housing problem. The young people rallied round Cleve in self-defense against slander. The local post of the American Legion, of which Cleve was a member, adopted a vigorous resolution indorsing his Happy Nests. The spirit of 1924 went to the mat with the spirit of 1776. The youth of Branchville charged at the old Nutley house as if it were another Hindenburg

"The battle of Poplar Pocket," said the newspaper girl. "A lot af flag-waving on both sides of the fence, but it doesn't mean

anything.

Her "Inquiring Reporter" column showed a daily majority in favor of progress and prosperity as opposed to the beauties of antiquity. In a popular vote, the project would no doubt have carried with a bang, but the more influential forces were in the thin gray line fighting for old Patience Nutley.

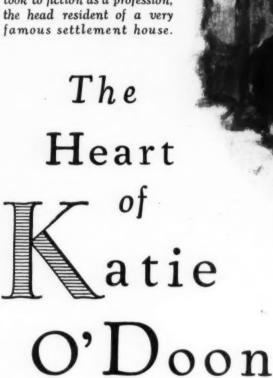
"People who haven't been inside a church since their weddingday," Connie told her father, "get all tearful about those beauti-

ful hymns."

"Perhaps I'm prejudiced by being in the fire-insurance business," said Father, "but the town's greatest need is for new houses." "If you could write policies for Cleve's Happy Nests, that would help a lot, wouldn't it, Dad?" (Continued on page 112)

(Continued on page 112)

MANY novelists who concern themselves with the "lower depths" of city life acquire their knowledge by a walk or two through the tenement district. Not so with Leroy Scott. The Cherry Lane of Katie O'Doon's birth is as familiar to him as the palm of his hand, for he was, once upon a time, before he took to fiction as a profession, the head resident of a very famous settlement house.





By Leroy Scott

The Story So Far:

THAT beautiful little pilgrim Katie O'Doon came to the first crossroad in her extraordinary progress when she was twelve, and the death of her mother caused her to leave the tenement where they had won a bare existence as washerwoman and washer-child. Fearing commitment to an asylum, Katie fled from Cherry Lane and the truant officer—to a drunkard aunt who lived in an old houseboat on the Hudson and earned her living by telling fortunes. Katie's father, it may be noted, had always been a picturesque but constant liability who earned his liquor singing Irish ballads in cheap saloons.

Four years Katie remained as assistant to her mediumistic Aunt Maggie. Then when she was sixteen and need no longer fear the truant officer, she staged a pretended suicide in the Hudson, and under the name of Mary O'Brien set out upon the career

that was to carry her so far and so strangely.

She was working in a ten-cent store when Fate shunted her

onto a new path by the rough means of an automobile accident. She was struck at a street crossing by the roadster of the wealthy society girl Lily Spencer, and that contrite young lady took Katie into her own luxurious home during her convalescence. There in Katie awoke the ambition to acquire the education she had neglected, and Lily Spencer helped her. But there Katie also learned many things not in books; and there she made the further acquaintance of Lily's best young man Billy Gordon—an acquaintance from which extraordinary consequences developed. There too she ran across Peter Romain, a handsome young Italian whom she had known as a pickpocket in her childhood, but who now stood high in the favor of Miss Spencer and other wealthy girls as a professional dancer.

Katie's immediate future, however, was with Madame Ravenal, the famous dressmaker whom Lily had persuaded to offer Katie a position. And at Madame Ravenal's, Katie's native cleverness,

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Illustrated by Lester Ralph



protests,-and in spite of Billy Gordon's proposal of marriage, which she refused,-Katie persisted in her idea, and presently the O'Doons, father and daughter, appeared in a sketch at Rogano's, though Katie was the only one, aside from Peter Romain, her old friend Morris Blum. and Madame Ravenal, who knew that their stage relationship was

also real.

The act was moderately successful, but one night Terence put in his appearance helplessly drunk-and that very evening Morris Blum had persuaded the theatrical producer Barney Feinham to witness the perform-ance! Katie cleverly carried off the sketch by herself, but Rogano discharged Terence, and Katie refused to continue without him. Feinham, however, had been sufficiently im-pressed to offer Katie a contract, and she persuaded him to include her father, although he had disappeared from the scene. Madame Ravenal car-

her capacity for hard work and her beauty each contributed its share toward a speedy success. She was earning thirty-five dollars a week as a model for Ravenal's most striking creations when she finally accepted one of Billy Gordon's many invitations to dine with him-and so brought about one of the most dramatic

evenings of her life.

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For Katie had copied for herself a striking green gown she had displayed for Madame Ravenal, and wore it that evening with young Gordon, who took her to Rogano's, a popular cabaret. There they encountered Lily Spencer, Peter Romain and Lily's friend the wealthy Madeleine Forsythe-and Madeleine was wearing the original of Katie's gown. In the dressing-room Madeleine attacked Katie about the frock, suggesting that Gordon had paid for it; Katie reverted to tenement ways, slapped Madeleine's face-and made an implacable enemy.

The big event of the evening, however, was Katie's encounter with her father, who was singing his Irish ballads at Rogano's. The restaurateur introduced Terence O'Doon to Gordon and "Miss O'Brien;" but while Katie knew him at once, he had no idea that this distinguished-looking girl was his daughter. He confided in them that his ambition was to put on a "father and daughter act"-and Katie astonished everyone by offering to be the daughter in this proposed vaudeville sketch. In spite of her friends'

ried her off to spend the night at her apartment. (The story continues in detail:)

HEN Katie awoke the next morning in the splendid Italian WHEN Katie awoke the next morning in the Rayenal, her first Renaissance guest-chamber of Madame Rayenal, her first thought, after that dizzy smudge of the intelligence which follows awakening, was again of her father, who had rushed forth in indignant artistic wrath. Madame Ravenal informed her that already Morris Blum had telephoned that he had located and had attached himself to the drunken artist, who was still stinging under the insults to his professional pride.

"We'll go back to our flat at once," said Katie, "and wait

for my father."

"All right; just as soon as you've had a cup of strong coffee," said Madame Ravenal.

Katie gulped down the coffee; and with no less haste she was gulped down by the outer integuments required for appearance upon a public highway. Twenty minutes later she and Madame Ravenal were in the characterless little two-room flat to whose impossible drabness Katie had vainly tried so hard to give char-

The pair waited for an hour in nervous silence. Then Morris Blum, as true to his trust as was possible, ushered in Terry O'Doon, in the same garments, though now woefully soiled and rumpled, that he had last been seen in some twelve hours before. He tried to exercise severe muscular control over himself and to give the perfect appearance of sobriety. Utterly oblivious of his crumpled clothes and soiled linen, he was formally courteous, was even the magnificent gentleman.

'Good morning to you, ladies," he said with a separate bow to Katie and Madame Ravenal, each bow a miracle that set at naught all the laws of equilibrium. "Tis a pleasure, ladies, far naught all the laws of equilibrium. "Tis a pleasure, ladies, far beyond the powers of Terence O'Doon to express, to have you

both beneath my humble roof-tree.

"Thank-thank you, Father," breathed Katie.

Terry O'Doon centered his gaze upon her, and it became a gaze of highly offended, though still highly courteous, dignity.

"Miss O'Brien," he remarked, bowing again, "you're a very excellent girl in your intentions. In your perhaps instinctive but uninstructed intentions I commend you, Miss O'Brien. But although we are teamed up in a father-and-daughter act, I now wish that my decision be definitely known to you. Please understand that what we may do in public is in the way of business, but in such intimate personal relations as the present, we are not to carry on this stage-nonsense, and you are not to address me as 'Father, as you have just done. The O'Doons, Miss O'Brien,-my line of the family, at least,-have the tradition of a respected and honored name, and that old tradition of my family I wish to maintain in all my private relationships. I trust, Miss O'Brien, that without being unduly offensive I have made myself adequately clear to you.

AT this verbose reproof, all delivered in his most magnificent and grandiloquent manner, Katie at first could only stare blankly at the kindly condescending, authoritative figure of her father, whose rigid erectness was warning that all might go toppling at any moment.

"Why, of course," she stammered, "just as you say, Fath-I mean, sir. Just as you say, sir."

You are wise and understanding for one of your tender years, Miss O'Brien," Terry O'Deon continued in his lofty and gracious manner. "It is wise, Miss O'Brien, that you have so promptly agreed in our present idea of our future relationships. understand from this young gentleman, whose name should be familiar-oh, yes, it's Blum-that during my temporary-ahabsence you assumed the authority to enter into a contract elsewhere for the team of the O'Doons, and at one hundred and fifty dollars a week. Is this information correct, Miss O'Brien? "Yes, Fath-yes, Mr. O'Doon."

"That action has my approval," he continued from his benign "In that new arrangement you now can see the concrete evidence, Miss O'Brien, of the great value of a working alliance with Terence O'Doon at your service. You were nobody; I picked you up. I do not mean that a boaster's words should have birth in my mouth, Miss O'Brien; but I cannot refrain from calling your attention to the great thing which has hap-pened. And I cannot refrain from giving you a few pertinent words of wisdom: if you will only watch me, and try to play up to my standard, then the team of the O'Doons-

But Morris Blum, at his side, had had all he could stand for that moment. He gave Terry O'Doon a gentle shove, and the great and benign O'Doon fell sidewise upon a couch-bed, in a very comfortable position, and instantly was in a sound sleep.

Madame Ravenal gripped Katie's shoulders. "Damn that old

souse! You're coming right along with me!"

"I'm not!" Katie cried back at her. "And you can go right

The two glared at each other, fiery anger and opposition in their eyes, for a long moment. And then, as sometimes happens with the right kind of women, they were suddenly clutching each other, and kissing each other, and crying over each other.

Morris and Madame Ravenal slipped quietly out together, leaving Katie in her jealous mother-guard over the sleeping infantman who believed all their relationships confined to his being the stage's stock figure of the father, with a stage daughter whom he coddles and adores upon the stage. The next two days he lay in bed, a sobering, sick and contrite man, while Katie either anticipated his needs or gave him aid when his desires were expressed in speech. Terry O'Doon had no memory of the scene in which he had forbidden Katie to call him father, and so Katie continued to call him father. The prime fact of which he was conscious was that that O'Brien girl he had picked up was trying to take very good care of him. A loyal girl, that Mary O'Brienreally an unexpectedly fine girl, and he'd see that she did not

suffer in the future, even though she did not add very much. beyond filling the place of the necessary daughter, to the act of the O'Doons. As for Katie, during these days, she thought of very little else except how to mother her clever, helpless child-

father back into passable form.

On the third day he was up and dressed, though still somewhat pale and wabbly. A certain humility lurked in the background of his manner, a humility like that due to an unpleasant memory not to be recognized or put into words. He was again the urbane, gracious, magnificent Terry O'Doon. He was very kind to Katie with that grand and gentle kindness which seeks to remove all sting from an obvious superiority. He often assured Katie that she could always count upon him, that Terry O'Doon would look after her.

In every word and every detail Katie presented to him a figure

of humble, girlish gratitude.

During his "indisposition," as we have seen, he had learned from Morris of their improved business opportunity. Unable to recall the matter, he none the less assumed that he himself had made this arrangement. So on this third day after the beginning of his indisposition, Katie at his side, he swaggered into the office of Barney Feinham, and with Katie he signed a contract giving exclusive control of the services of the O'Doons for a period of three years at one hundred and fifty dollars a week for the two when employed-which was three or four times as much as Terry O'Doon's personal engagements had ever earned for him.

Outside, on the street, he was more than ever the benign. gracious gentleman with his stage daughter, Katie, who as yet. the green colleen that she was, seemed not properly articulate over the service he had rendered a worthy young female creature.

"'Tis an old saying, Miss O'Brien, but 'tis nevertheless true," he said to her. "Real merit eventually is recognized and wins its due reward, as you have just seen in the securing of our excellent contract. And permit me to add, Miss O'Brien, that it has been a distinct gratification to me that I have been able to help you onward and upward."

'I appreciate all you have done, and I thank you, Father," said Katie in her best girlish humility. But giving him a sidewise glance, she thought worriedly whether she was ever going to be able to keep this father of hers sober enough to hold down his

new job.

THEY reported together for rehearsal at ten o'clock the next morning. Feinham was just then engaged in one of Broadway's established business devices. Feinham had a musical comedy, "Bubbles o' Laugh," which for months had been very distinctly a success in New York, but whose popularity had so worn out that the play was to close in New York in two weeks. But it still had money possibilities as a road show, and Feinham was preparing to send it on tour. The ancient and therefore honorable Broadway custom Feinham was following was to send his show out billed as "With the Original New York Cast;" in fact, Feinham was busy in ridding himself of most of the chief players who had made his show a success, and replacing them with lower-salaried actors. And that the customary lie should not be wholly a lie, he was breaking in these substitute actors to play out the remaining unprofitable performances in New York. Therefore, if ever challenged, he could truly say with the pained and righteous virtue of a theatrical manager that his cast was the New York cast, and he could produce New York play-bills to prove his statement.

However, Feinham was keeping one member of his really-truly original cast. This was Kitty Adair, who had been baptized under a long, queer-looking Polish name. Kitty was not the lead; she had the part of the modernized soubrette, who seems a necessary ingredient of all present-day musical plays, a cute, pretty, acrobatic little Miss Mischief who is always up to delightful pranks. Kitty was paid four hundred a week, and was worth it, and Fein-

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ham knew it.

Katie was thrown straight into the chorus, had no greater prominence than appearing as a unit in a flock of girls, and her name appeared on the program far back amid the advertisements among the ladies of the *ensemble*. Her father fared much better. In "Bubbles o' Laugh" there was a bit of a part for a father, and the father had a bit of a song. In Feinham's secondhand company this bit fell to Terry O'Doon, and his name appeared up among the principals, and he was very proud. On the whole, considering the positions they then held, the O'Doons were really being very well paid.

In the quick substitutions that were being made in the cast of "Bubbles o' Laugh," there was one change which gave Katie a



Several times Katie saw her father and Lily having their drinks together.

genuine surprise. A second established ingredient of every such production is a pair of dancers. Katie's surprise came at the beginning of a rehearsal—she had at that time appeared in the chorus in four public performances—when Peter Romain, accompanied by a superior-looking and amazingly dressed young woman, walked out upon the ugly, undressed stage. Katic quickly learned the truth: the girl was Peter's dancing partner; she had assumed the professional name of Mitzi Malone; and Romain and Malone had been signed on to take the place of the clever and expensive team which had helped "Bubbles o' Laugh" to win its now ebbed New York prosperity.

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The rehearsal, everyone in street clothes, got under way. Katie soon had to acknowledge Peter Romain to be an extraordinarily good dancer; but Mitzi Malone, for all her superior and sophisticated airs of the theater, was just ordinary. Katie knew that Peter recognized her; and she saw him speak to her father, who was obviously flattered by this attention from a member of the company ranking so much higher than himself. He did not re-

member the smart-looking Peter as the young boy he had long ago occasionally seen down in Cherry Lane.

But when that rehearsal was over and all were leaving, Peter stopped Katie near the stage-entrance and drew her aside.

"If it isn't Katie O'Doon, the old friend of me childhood," he said mockingly with exaggerated pleasure. "Katie O'Doon and her father and me, all in the same company. And yet people don't like to believe in coincidences!"

"It's no wish of mine that we're to be together!" Katie flared

"No?" drawled Peter, with his taunting look. "Now, Katie, I'm different. I really wish you better than you deserve—better than being a nameless nobody in a bunch of chorus girls."

"If I do better, it will not be because of you, Angel Face!" she

exclaimed furiously. "It will be because I've tried!"

"Now, don't let's get personal and fight, Katie," he said, flicking gracefully at the ash of his cigarette with his little finger—a gesture which he must have long practiced. "Remember, Katie,

my childhood's dearest memory, that you and I are booked up to work together for quite a while, and it doesn't pay to fight while working on the same job. By the way-when some time ago I spoke to you about having a big job in the near future, this present job is not at all what I meant. This job is just accidental, and fills in time. Besides, Mitzi Malone hasn't got the class; I'm letting her hang around just because she's good enough for present circumstances. When my big chance comes, Mitzi gets a can tied to her and I find a new partner who possesses the necessary class. By-by, Katie.

He lifted his hat with his taunting courtesy to Katie the mere chorus girl, and sauntered away,

lightly swinging his Malacca stick.

Chapter Fifteen

WITHIN a day or two Katie had another surprise from an entirely different source. Kitty Adair had a wild verbal fight during an afternoon rehearsal of the new "original company" which was being which was being whipped into shape. The cause Katie never knew; perhaps it was that the demure and sweet Kitty Adair had a barbaric Slavic temper, or perhaps it was that Kitty had just exchanged a shopworn old husband who had been in her sight for all of two years, for a brand-new husband, and had suddenly decided she could not bear to leave this absorbing domestic novelty for the dull routine of the road. At any rate, she burst into Feinham's office, a figure of concentrated

"I'm quitting you!" she yelled the instant of her entrance. "You'll never see me again—unless on another manager's stage!"

"But, Kitty, I-I don't understand-" the flabber-

gasted Feinham began.

"Don't you 'Kitty' me, Feinham!" broke in sweet Kitty Adair. "And if you don't understand, I'll try to make the point clear to that mess of oatmeal you call your brain. I'm quitting the show, Feinham. Is that clear to you? And I'm quitting this minute! It's entirely up to you whether you cut out the part, or get another girl. This is good-by, and to hell with

But Feinham was up and had a grip on the wrist of the hand that was gripping the doorknob.

"Kitty-you can't be quitting me like this?" he

shouted.

'Oh, I can't! Well, I'm doing it, aint I!" Then Feinham remembered his legal rights. "You can't do it, Kitty-not without giving me proper no-You know I've got you under contract.

'You and your contract be damned!'

"But you'd better remember, Kitty, that I can sue you for breach of that contract.

"Sue if you want to! Sue! But I'd stall your old suit along in court for a dozen years. And then, if

you do win, I've got a husband who's able to pay any damages you ever get. Now, you let go of me, Feinham, or you'll have a suit of another kind on your hands-a suit for assault and battery with injury to the body, and if you've not already made black-and-blue marks on my arm, I'll make 'em myself as evidence to show the court!

Feinham let go. The next instant sweet Kitty Adair was out, and a slammed door had sealed her exit. Feinham sank limply into his chair, for the time unable to express himself, and stared for a long moment across his desk at his promoted musical director, Morris Blum, who somehow seemed always to be present

when difficulties were about.

"Morris," Feinham presently exploded in tragic verbosity, "did you hear what Kitty said? Do you know what Kitty's done? And Kitty's right about one thing-I can't ever get anything out of her that wont cost me more than I get! But the show, Morris -the show! I can't cut the part out-you know that-and it's now four o'clock, and I ask you, where am I to find a new girl, train her for the part, and have her made up, all by eight o'clock? I ask you that.

"You already have her," said the quiet Morris Blum.



"Grennie, Mary O'Brien, here, wants a new gown.

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"Already got her!" cried the frantic Feinham. "Where have I got her hid? Mebbe you think I've got her hid under my gold

"You've got her hid in your own chorus."

"A girl to take Kitty Adair's part in my bum chorus! A joke's a joke, Morris, and I'm willing to laugh when I've got time—but just now's no time for you to talk like a fool!"

"Her name is Katie O'Doon," continued Morris in his even tone. "Katie O'Doon! Why, that girl hasn't even been in a first-class chorus yet! And she's just now breaking into her first real show!" "She's been in shows all her life—only she doesn't know it.

I think she can do the part."

"But, Morris-just a chorus girl, and learn such a fat part in three-four hours! Morris, you are a fool!"

"I think Katie O'Doon already knows the part, and probably every part in the show," Morris replied in his quiet voice. "Anyhow, I'm willing to work with her from now until the curtain goes up, rehearsing her in anything she doesn't know."

Feinham threw up the hands of resignation. "All right-go ahead and be a fool, Morris! Anyhow, we've got to have some one to fill that hole in the play; and I guess it's lucky for us



I want you to see that she gets the best in the shop, and that she's charged at our cost price."

that there wont be much of a crowd out front tonight to see the bust. But you make it plain to the O'Doon girl that she's just filling in for a couple of performances, and I'll get busy and find a real one for the part."

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That night Katie O'Doon went on in Kitty Adair's old rôle. She seemed to please the small audience of the waning show. Morris had been right. Having the gift of eager eyes and ears which automatically record everything, and having the power of imitation, both of which powers are in themselves not necessarily of a high order, she went through Kitty's lines and business

without a slip. Also she sang Kitty's two songs adequately.
"What did I tell you, Morris?" demanded Feinham when the first curtain descended. "Didn't I tell you that that Katie O'Doon

was the girl for the part? Wasn't I right?"
"You were right," replied Morris, not so much as blinking a disagreeing eyelash.

At the final curtain Feinham, before most of his company, told Katie that he was going to keep her on in Kitty Adair's part. He did not say, however, that she was to have Kitty Adair's four hundred a week; in fact, he said nothing about money at all, and Katie's salary was not raised. Such things are not voluntarily

done in the theater-at least in the theater of Barney's type. for Katie, for once she did not think about more money. What she had just done in Kitty Adair's part was the easiest work she had ever done; she really did not think she was very good; and she still really thought she was being very well paid.

And of course Feinham was technically within his rights. He had Katie under contract at a fixed salary for three years.

When Katie at the end of this first performance reached her dressing-room door, there stood her father. Terry O'Doon regarded her in a new manner. In the past he had always treated her with the respect due himself and a lady. Now he was almost reverential.

"Permit me to compliment you," he began, "and to say that I am gratified and amazed, Miss O'Brien, in what-

"Katie O'Doon!" she cut him short.
"Why—why—what's that?" he stammered.

"I said I was going to keep the name of Katie O'Doon. And we're going to remain the stage-team of The O'Doons-father and daughter."

For a moment he could only stare at her in his bewilderment at what she had said, and its implications. (Continued on page 102)

Josephine Daskam Bacon

A few months ago Mrs. Bacon went abroad to attend a great international meeting of the Girl Scouts, in the welfare of which she is deeply interested, and to refresh memories of European scenes familiar to her from many visits before the war. Against the background of the Paris of today she is now engaged in telling the stories of certain Americans, with that sympathetic understanding which has always been hers. Here, then, is one of those tales—a love-story of a different sort.



Illustrated by Ralph Pallen Coleman l a m e

IT was in April, a late spring, with only the tiniest little buds on the horse-chestnuts, and an edge in the air, once you were out of the elusive Paris sunlight. But it was also the Parc Monceau, which cannot help being charming in any month of any year in the calendar; whose turf is always green, whose ivies are always, if somewhat self-consciously, classic, whose glades and dells and curves and slopes are always so bewitchingly adjusted to the eye that you cannot imagine adding a spear to the grass or subtracting a teaspoonful from the soil without seriously injuring the artistic whole.

On a park chair, strategically planted in a square of sunlight just at the edge of a bubbling whirlpool of children, there sat a woman, alone and very quiet. She was so motionless, indeed, that the pigeons walked carelessly about her skirts, searching for crumbs, and the tiny French people paid no attention whatever to her, but spooned up the gravel at her feet and bounced their aimless balls over her shoulder. It would have been difficult to give her any definite age, for although clothes do not make a woman, really, they modify her to a great extent, and only an out-and-out beauty could have emerged triumphant from the shapeless and untidy garments of this woman.

At a season where every normal female indignantly repudiates that mystic dictum which concerns the somewhat unconstructive policy of the lilies of the field, and yearns only to imitate their delightful results, she wore a creased and evidently much-used sport-suit of a dim and dingy shade. In a city where the poorest girl finds a way to tilt the simplest hat to smartness and springtime, she kept a shapeless felt basin, with a stained and faded ribbon, to the service of a month for which it was never destined. And on a pavement which resounds, as no other pavement in the world, to the patter of tiny heels and intriguing straps and buckles, she walked in worn flat-heeled "ties" with discolored cotton lacings. None of the coiffeurs who make, it would seem, such a con-

None of the coiffeurs who make, it would seem, such a considerable proportion of the population of Paris, had received his modest fee for the ondulation of her rough, dark hair, which drooped unbecomingly about her sallow cheeks; deep circles underlay her deep-set brown eyes, and took away, with a suggestion of unhealthiness, from their undoubted beauty. When she opened them wide, under her square, heavy brows, and stared emptily across the trees, you saw that they were her best feature, full of force and intelligence, even passion. Her hands lay ungloved, idle, on her lap, as motionless as she. They were not small, but beautifully formed, with fingers long, square-tipped and, somewhat surprisingly, exquisitely tended, with curved, almond-shaped nails.

An interesting, but not an attractive girl. Allowing for possible ill health, or trouble, you would put her somewhere on the treacherous slope of the early thirties; and only great beauty, perfect physical soundness, unusual intelligence or profound care of the person can soften this rapid descent into a smooth, indefinite plateau. This girl was obviously not interested in such

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A rubber ball rolled suddenly under her skirt, and its owner, alarmed, raised a shrill cry of, "Miss! Miss!" A severe English governess answered instantly. "Well, then, Gabrielle, ask the lady to allow you to fetch it out. And in English, mind—she is English." "May I fetch my ball, if you please? I am sorry," pronounced the mite in faultless English, adding, "I thank you very much—merci infiniment, madame," as the girl, with an absentminded French phrase, reached down and handed back the toy.
"But all the same, she's not English," muttered the man whose

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chair rested in the farthest corner of the patch of sun, peering through the heavy black glasses that almost masked his face. "She's dressed like one, the Lord knows, but she's an Americanleft-handed, too, like me. I'll bet she returns a nasty back-hand ball with that big paw of hers! Sport-fiend, probably. But she's certainly no beauty."

The children near his chair, who had grown used to the occasional soliloquies of the tall, pale American in the black goggles, smiled at one another and jostled his chair carelessly. They were quite accustomed to him, and he had sat there often, in the morning, now, for hours. Sometimes he took a sandwich out of his bulging, untidy pocket, and an apple, and ate his luncheon there. For long periods of time he kept an unlighted cigarette in an enormous ivory holder between his lips, but he never put a match to it. Sometimes he drew amusing pictures in the gravel with his stick, and at such times they gathered around him, appreciative and delighted, for they much preferred intelligent drawmake an awfully good poster," she said.

ing to play, and would even suggest subjects, which he gravely accepted, and they as gravely criticized.

He was long, loose from the hips, like many of his countrymen, and had the humorous grin that Europeans associate with the Americans. But this morning he looked triste, chewing the ivory cigarette-holder steadily, poking meaningless holes in the gravel, unresponsive to the tentative advances of the children. He did not even offer to assist the fat old Alsatian nurse in a lace headdress with her umbrella, folding chair, knitting-basket, perambulator and baby, as he often did in the good-natured American way.

But he had not entirely lost these kindly habits, for as the girl in the wrinkled sport-suit rose abruptly from her chair and dropped her leather handbag, he moved instinctively to pick it from the ground. It was a worn bag, bulging uncomfortably, with a loosened catch, and as he seized it awkwardly, it fell apart, and a mass of letters, newspaper clippings and unassorted

odds and ends fell from it and fluttered about. They collected the débris swiftly and in silence; neither was sufficiently embarrassed or, it seemed, sufficiently interested to speak. He was interested only in returning the scattered objects; she cared only to receive them; and it is to be doubted if he would have done more than raise his hat and express a brief apology, had it not been for a final picture postcard, which he pulled out from under his chair and glanced at unconsciously in holding it out to her.

It was a sufficiently harmless picture, even banal, and represented four men and a woman, packed flat like sardines in a box on a huge bobsled, careering down a glis-tening mountain slope of snow and ice. "Happiness at tening mountain slope of snow and ice. St. Moritz!" was its legend, and a second inscription, "Society at its favorite winter sport," was printed below the written message. But harmless and banal as it was, it had a curious effect on the man, for with a kind of snorting sob, he threw it violently from him, as if it had been a poisonous snake, and glared through his disfiguring black glasses at the girl, who stared back at him, surprised and confused. "Monsieur!" she began, more doubtful than angry, for

her supreme indifference, which was her most obvious feature, saved her from petty irritability, and her courage was as obvious as her indifference. She was no chicken, this girl, and well able to protect herself when it was necessary; carelessly dressed she might be, but she had seen the world.

One felt it.

"I'm awfully sorry," he said abruptly, capturing the postcard in three long, easy strides and advancing toward her, a brick-red flush on his thin cheeks. "I didn't mean to be such an idiot. But unfortunately the darned thing got on my nerves-it was just a bit too much. Here it is.

"A bit too much?" she repeated vaguely. "Thank you;

I'm afraid I-

"Oh, you couldn't be expected to understand," he interrupted with a wry little grin. "It's harmless enough, I suppose, though it's worse posed than most of them, for that matter! But it happens that 'Happiness at St. Moritz' is a pretty ironic remark, from my point of view, that's all. And it sort of came over me. I didn't mean to frighten you."

"You didn't frighten me at all," she answered com-

"You don't care for St. Moritz, then?"

"I owe these to it," he said dryly, tapping the black oggles with his long, nervous hand. "I went nearly blind goggles with his long, nervous hand.

"Oh," she murmured, in her vague, indifferent voice, not looking at him, "really! Snow-glare, I suppose you mean.

But that passes, doesn't it?"

Her very calmness had a greater effect on his confidence than any easy sympathy. He would have shrunk from that, but her lack of it seemed to spur him.

"Unfortunately, in my case, it wont," he said briefly. optic nerve, they tell me, has been injured. I had strained my eyes pretty badly, etching, and this settled it."

"Oh, you're an artist, then?"
"I was," he said, and clenched his hands. She looked at him The pathos of that terrible little verb penetrated even

her indifference, and her voice seemed a little less remote.
"That's hard," she murmured a little more gently, "that's very hard. I don't blame you for hating the card. I—I loathe St. Moritz, myself."

"Oh, you've been there?"

The surprise in his voice was evident; she did not look like a person who would be interested in "Society's favorite winter sport.

She smiled scornfully. She understood him, well enough, and showed it, so that he grew red again, uncomfortably.

"I was there six weeks," she said, staring ahead of her with that empty, absent stare, "six weeks. Oh, God, why did

The sudden, uncontrolled passion of her voice was startling: it was as if a jagged, blood-red streak shot across a stretch of

Now it was his turn to stare, a little doubtfully, for after all, a woman whom you have never seen before in your life, an unattractive, lone woman- She bit her lips together and flushed

"Oh, I'm not a lunatic," she said, "though you might think But you're not the only one that St. Moritz did for-look

She held out her two wrists side by side, turned downward,



and he saw that the right one was slightly enlarged, and swollen out of line--not slim and flexible, like the other.

"You broke it?" he asked, wondering a little, and she nodded. "But-really, it hardly shows," he began, not knowing what he was expected to say. "No one would be likely to notice it-

"The audience would be likely to notice it, I assure you," she

said roughly, "if I ever attempted to play with it again."
"O-o-oh!" he whistled slowly. "So that's it! You—you're a musician? Violin?"
"Piano," she answered brusquely. "I had just made my début

"That's pretty tough," he said gently, "pretty darn tough.

But can't anything be done? Wont it knit?"

"That's the trouble," she answered. "It has knit. It was set

wrong. Eight weeks ago. It's no good-I've been to everybody, and it's no good."

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"But who set it? Was it on one of those damnable bobsleds?" "Yes," she said, and sat suddenly on her chair. He drew his

"For a week I never did anything but skate," she began in a monotonous voice. "My friend, that I went with, wouldn't have taken me down with her if I'd wanted to-which I didn't. Of course I wouldn't have gone with the men-that's so dangerous, you know, that they make them take one woman on the big runs just to make them a little careful. But the bobsleds-for three women—are all right, if you've got the nerve. I suppose I was crazy. I was sent there for the rest—I'd been practicing eight hours a day, and my début was even more of a success than they had hoped, and I wasn't to touch the piano for a fortnight. Mayer had my contract all signed for the States. felt pretty good. So a little American girl asked me, and I went down. She was a wonderful steersman-had never had a



"Was her name Anne something? Did she wear a red cap?" he asked.

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"Yes. Well, she had her spill-that's all. She was unconscious for half an hour, but perfectly all right afterward, and went down again the next day. The other girl had to be dug out from seven feet of snow. I fell with my wrist against the steering-wheel, and I knew something had happened to it. It hurt, of course, but not so frightfully. They all told me to let the hotel doctor fix it up for the moment, till I could get to London or Paris, and so I did. He said it was very simple, and I'd better let it alone, when he was through. It healed in five days, and I had it X-rayed in Lausanne, and they said it would be all right, and to keep it in the cast. So I did. I hadn't any pain, and it seemed to grow stronger all the time. I stayed a month. Then in Paris, here, they told me it was all wrong, and I managed to get Brewer, who was over in London, and he said it would be too dangerous to break it again and set it right. He was very kind, but he said it was no use."

She set her jaw and grew pale. "And he had been at St.

Moritz the day before it happened!" she said, very low. "He could have saved it, probably!

He shook his head. "Pretty tough," he said again; "had you been studying long?" "Eight years—really seriously," she answered.

Suddenly she looked around her. They were alone in the park, it seemed. The children had all gone home to luncheon.

"I—I must go," she said abruptly. "I don't know why I babbled like this to you. I never do. I suppose it was hearing

about your—your accident. I must go."

"Perhaps we'll meet again," he said, not looking at her, a little wrinkle of pain between his eyes. "I often come here. Good-by."

"Perhaps," she said. "Good-by." And she walked quickly away.

He never even glanced after her.

The next day it rained steadily, a cold, driving, sleety downpour. He tramped the streets, never still, for inaction drove him crazy, and his drawing-boards and copper plates made a disheartening litter in the big room that opened out of his tiny bedroom. He ate, automatically, at the first cafe that presented itself, when he felt hungry, and stood for some time cynically regarding the chilly bronze ladies on the edge of the great fountain of the Place de la Concorde, phlegmatically pouring streams of water over their unprotected shoulders from their bubbling cornucopias.

"I suppose they'd keep that up if the Seine should rise to the top of Notre Dame!" he muttered. "You can't stop the

French doing what they've always done."

SUDDENLY at three o'clock a light, unreasonable sun streamed out over the city. The Parisians laughed and chattered, furled their umbrellas, cocked their moist hats at a rakish angle and fled to the sidewalk tables to celebrate the weather. It became

a holiday, suddenly, a jour de fête.

The violent, blinding light was too much for his eyes, and he turned toward the little park which would be, at least, sheltered. Mechanically he made for the little island of green where he usually sat, and noticed, with a certain irritation, that a woman was already seated in the deepest corner. When he came nearer, he saw that it was the girl of yesterday, but she looked, somehow, different, younger. She was certainly under thirty, not over it. In a few more steps, the reason was fairly clear: she was greatly improved in appearance. Her suit had been well pressed; her hat, though simple to severity, was of straw, and became her; her thick bobbed hair, though straight and decidedly Joan-of-Arc in contour, had been evenly trimmed and brushed. Her low shoes, though "common sense" in type, were trim and silk-laced, and a pair of fresh leather gloves lay on her lap with a new businesslike leather handbag. A neck-piece of glossy brown fur gave a touch of luxury to what was, on the whole, a creditable tailored effect; one wouldn't have minded taking her out. She had even a little boutonnière of violets-a franc the bunch-pinned on one lapel of her coat. She would never be a coquettish, feminine type: hers was the straightforward, boyish line that gains a certain distinction against a Paris background.

As he neared her, she rose and extended her left hand frankly. "Good afternoon," she said in her low, oddly colorless voice.

"Wont you take this place? It's best, for the glare, isn't it?"
"You're very kind to think of it," he answered, touched at what was, for her, he seemed to realize, an unusual consideration. 'I will, if you don't mind. Much more of this, and I'd have a beastly headache."

"Face the hedge, why don't you?" she suggested, and took another chair beside him. "How long have your eyes been so

bad?"

"About three weeks," he said. "Nobody warned me, you see, and I thought it would be rather sissy to put on dark glassesnone of the men I was with wore them. And the doctor said all I needed was complete rest from etching, for a month. always loved winter sports and never had them over here-only at school and college, you know. So when my eyes began to hurt, I supposed it came from adjusting them to a bigger angle, as I had been advised to do, and kept on staring at the mountains! Then one fine afternoon, skiing, everything went red and jagged, and then black, and I began to have a splitting headache and a few other little things, and then—blah! Nearly all gone. No can do.

o can do."
"But surely," she began, "the big oculists—"
"Oh, I've seen them all! The big Johnny in Vienna, and
"Oh, I've seen them all! They be was over here by good luck. They Wilmer from Washington; he was over here by good luck. all say the same.

"And will you always have to-I mean-will it-will it get

worse?"

"Maybe not-probably not, they think. It came so sudden, you see. Dark glasses always, in a strong glare, if I'm sensible, but less and less, very likely. But special eyeglasses, a little later, and no fine work of any kind. Not even painting; I don't see colors, as I used to-fine shades, I mean."

"Oh-you painted too?"

"That's what I was supposed to be doing. Then I got awfully interested in etching, and I couldn't seem to do anything else. I'd only been two years at it and-and I got into the autumn Salon, this year."

"No, really? How wonderful!" she said with the quick artist

sympathy.

"It was rather jolly. And the Government bought one, besides."

"Well, well! What was it?"

"It was a corner of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier-taken three-quarters on, if you see what I mean. It was sort of an odd idea, and I think that was what got them. You know how they are."

'Oh, yes—'Comme c'est bizarre!'" she quoted, a little scorn-ly. "Bizarre' seems to be the greatest praise they can give anything, from an evening dress to a circus-act!

"That's them!" His Yankee grin flicked across his sad face.

he agreed.

"Anyhow, I'm glad the old Tomb got across, before I went

bad. Like to see it?'

"Yes indeed!" she answered, and he took out of a worn wallet the treasured printed column, with a rough cut of the classic, lovely shaft and the enthusiastic comment of the reviewer, who found in Mr. Wesley Cromer's work a great promise for the future of American etching. The French critics, he added, found in his strong, assured style a distinctly Gallic flavor and a gratifying lack of Anglo-Saxon sentimentality, a quality which, he added modestly, his countrymen were perhaps incapable of comprehending.

She looked up and laughed shortly.
"That's what they said about me!" she said. "Really? How funny! What was it?"

She took from her new handbag a little roll of newspaper clippings, selected one, handed it to him in silence, studying the etching the while. He read it curiously, glancing from her to the picture of her in a column of the Paris edition of the Herald, a clever, intense face, younger, apparently, than she, well set on a long, round throat and squared shoulders rising from a severe, dark evening gown, with a quaint Maltese cross on a fine chain for her only ornament. Miss Janet Crewe, it appeared, had avoided the temptation of a too early début and had, as a result, done great-even very great-credit to Mme. Leschitisky and Mr. Cortot, who admitted her to be their most promising pupil in five years. Her success with the Grieg "Concerto" had roused even the orchestra to well-merited applause, an enthusiasm based on a magnificent and really masculine technique, utterly unspoiled by the temperamental quality so often relied upon by young women to cover grave defects of method. Indeed, no shadow of the sentimentality so often and so mistakenly applied to this famous concerto marred a rendition which well deserved the interest manifested in Miss Crewe's career by one of the United States' leading concert managers. America could not fail to honor so brilliant a young countrywoman in proportion to her merit.

I wish I could have heard you, Miss Crewe," he said sincerely. "I'm no great critic, but I'm fond of music. And that's a good thing, for I've got to begin to go to concerts. The light on the stage strains my eyes, and I have to watch 'em pretty closely

yet, to understand 'em. I'll miss the play, though.'
"Why don't you go to the opera?" she asked. "You could close your eyes, whenever you liked, and the music would still be

going on.'

"That's a good idea," he said thoughtfully. "I'll begin as soon as I dare to. There are lots of operas I've never heard, and I'd like it."

THEY sat quietly for a moment, and then he burst out sud-"I don't know why you should be so kind to me! I'm ashamed

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of myself, spouting all my affairs like this-I don't usually. 'I don't think you spouted," she answered quickly. if you did, then I did yesterday! I was ashamed of myself, if you like, for showing no sympathy with—with anybody. That—that was why I came back," she added frankly.
"Oh, I see," he said a little doubtfully. "I see. Well, it was

very kind of you, anyway-here, let me do that!"

For while he was fumbling for the sous in his little purse, she had taken out two coins and paid the fussy old woman in the black shawl who had come to collect for the park chairs. "See here, this wont do," he added decidedly. "If you pay

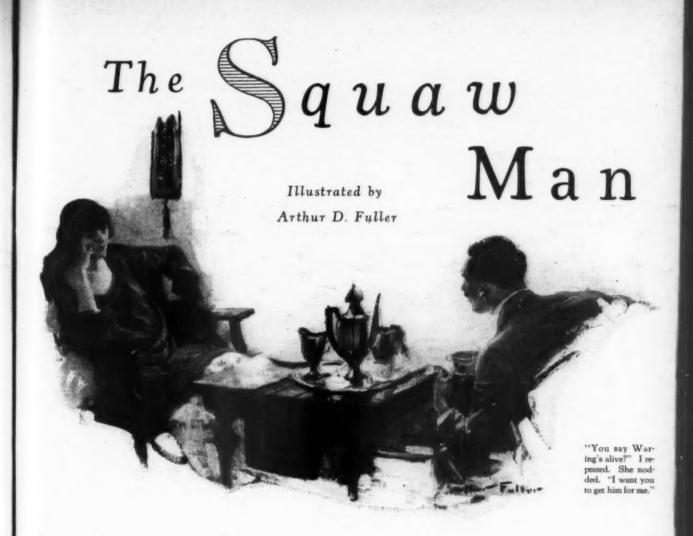
for my chair, I must take you to tea. Women always like tea, don't they?'

"Oh, yes, I like tea well enough," she said vaguely. interest had flagged, it seemed, and she was back in her thoughts

"Now that she's made good," he thought resentfully, "and squared herself with her conscience, she's through! We'll see about that!"

"It'll do you good," he said with determined cheerfulness. "This is a hard time of day, I know. Let's go to some jolly

ittle place, that's warm, and you can tell me about some operas!"
"Very well," she agreed listlessly, "if you really want to. It doesn't make much difference to me, (Continued on page 94)



By Arthur Stringer

I SCARCELY realized, as I bowed to Baron de Tillois on the steps, and in the doorway brushed by Tedesco, the new tenor at the Metropolitan, that these august departures were in any way a preparation for my arrival. It even struck me as odd that I should find Daulis Prudyn alone in her mulberry-tinted library, ramparted behind her tea-things, as isolated from the rush of life, at the moment, as a ticket-seller in his subway booth.

She was as serene as of old, but there was a factitious languor, I felt, about the white hand that passed me the little Coalport cup.

"We've found Waring," she said as she put down the sugar-tongs.

I almost dropped her precious bit of china at the statement. "You've found Waring?" I repeated, as much aghast at the quietness with which she could pass that bit of news on to me, as I was at the news itself.

"Without a doubt," she said as she held out the cinnamon toast to me. And I sat for a full minute, ignoring the proffered plate and staring into her jade-green eyes with the slumberous light behind them. For Waring Prudyn, we had all said for the last three-quarters of a year, was dead—dead as a doornail. His

Each year the author of this story hears the call of the North and fares thither. Returning, he brings new tales of the frozen stillness, as here and now—tales of remote places that are yet curiously linked with civilization. And among all his stories of the sub-Arctic the present must take a high place, for never has Mr. Stringer more completely captured the atmosphere of the Northern wilderness than in the present narrative.

young wife had never agreed with us. She had clung blindly to the belief that he was still alive, inexplicable as his sudden dropping out of life may have appeared. For in dropping out, he had left behind him an unassailable social position, a bride who was reckoned one of the superbly beautiful women of her set, with three or four million dollars sagaciously invested in railway bonds and another half-million or so scattered about in a town house and a Newport villa, to say nothing of the Pasadena Colonial-Hispanic palace that masqueraded as a bungalow, and the Pinehurst cottage that stood a halfway house for interseasonal flights.

He had left all that, without a word of warning, as abruptly as a humming-bird leaves a rose-garden. He had dropped out of things, out of the smoothed circumstances that could make life enviable to any man, exactly as though a trapdoor had opened under his feet.

"You say Waring's alive?" I rather inanely repeated, scarcely noticing the shell-pink flush that crept slowly up into her face.

She nodded as she put down her cup.
"I want you to get him for me," she said with the imperious

quietness that is the prerogative of the beautiful. And the color that receded from her face as her studious eyes met mine left her more virginal-looking than ever.
"But where is he?" I asked as I put down my teacup.

seemed too much like fiddling over a burning Rome, to drink

Oolong at such a time.

"In the Skokeen Valley," was her quiet reply. But in the ivory smoothness of her neck I could count the pulse of her quickened heartbeats.

"And where is that valley?" I demanded.

SHE didn't seem to have heard me. Her eyes, I noticed, were looking above and beyond me when she next spoke.

"They found him there in a cabin built of jack-pine, with a roof made out of cedar-bark. They said they found him quite alone there, except for an Indian woman he had to do his cooking for him.

"Who did?" I asked out of the prolonging silence. "Who did?" I asked out of the protong awakening.
She looked about at me like a woman just awakening.

"It was the men in one of the forest-patrol 'planes, with a frown on her smooth brow. "They were Government firerangers. Since the war, I understand, they've used sea-planes for patrolling the inland valleys. They'd gone north from Hazelton and were somewhere east of the Skeena River when they had engine-trouble and had to make a forced landing. down in a narrow lake between the pine hills and thought they were two hundred miles from a living soul. But they saw smoke between the trees and found the Indian woman curing fish in front of the cabin.

"But Waring?" I prompted, disregarding her growing pallor. "He was there," she said after a moment's silence. "He was in the cabin smoking a pipe and putting some sort of grease on a set of traps.

"Why, that must be northern British Columbia," I had brains

enough to deduce. "How did you find out about it?

'One of the aviators had seen Waring's picture in an old Seattle paper. At first, for some reason, Waring denied he was the missing man. But later he acknowledged the truth. Only, he said he didn't want any fuss made about it. He wouldn't, of course!"
"No, he wouldn't," I compelled myself to agree. "But how did

all this get through to you?

Daulis, without looking at my cup, casually asked if I cared for more tea. My thirst, as I repeated my earlier question, was for

something quite different.

The aviator talked it over with a fur-buyer named McGilliwie, when he got back to Hazelton," pursued Waring's wife. "This Mr. McGilliwie, when he returned to Montreal last week, wrote me a very nice letter. He'd read about the case, of course, and felt that I ought to be told."

But my dear Daulis," I interposed, "what evidence have you that there's a grain of truth in secondhand gossip like that?

"That's what I want you to find out," was her tranquil retort. "You mean you want me to go clean across the continent and halfway up to the Pole, to run down a hearsay clue like that?" I interrogated, a little nettled by the casualness of it all.

You offered to go to Cairo, when that first crazy cable came,"

she reminded me.

"I know. But one can go to Cairo without getting one's ears frozen off. And this seems to be somewhere up around the backdoor of Alaska.

"You go to much worse places than that after moose, don't you?" she gently inquired. And that query drove me to wondering why nothing could be more excoriating than the scorn of a beautiful woman.

"But I get a moose, for my trouble," I countered, knowing it was not the trip that appalled me, but what might happen at the

end of it.

"Isn't Waring as important as a moose?" she asked, her lips

compressed.

"Yes, but I can't go up there and put a bullet through Waring and bring his head back with me," I reminded her.

THE brutality of that speech I failed to realize until I once more detected the telltale color mounting to her cheeks.

"Are you implying that Waring wont want to come back, out of wretchedness like that, when he's told that I'm waiting and willing to take him back?" she made answer.

It was my turn, I'm afraid, to show a trace of color.

"Of course he'll come back," I valorously proclaimed. But for the second time, I noticed, my words failed to reach her. She turned to me, after a pause, with one of her intimate looks.

"I'd never confess it to anyone but you, Stephen, but all along I've been worried by the fear it might be another woman. was worse, almost, than the fear that Waring was dead."

"Well, we've at least got that off our minds," I retorted, trying not to appear ill at ease.

She nodded, and sat silent.

"Stephen, what are Indian women like?" she finally inquired.

I could afford to laugh at the largeness of that query

"It all depends on your Indian," I explained, with a vague feeling of battlefield communications being cut in the rear.

"But Indians that far away from everything?" she prompted. I shut my eyes and tried to visualize the type. I could see the

need, however, of toning down the picture.

"If she's West Coast, she's probably a Siwash. That means she's fat, with rather piggy eyes and bad teeth, and lard rubbed on her hair. It's ten to one she wears sakalooks that are a bit greasy and spends her off hours in hunting vermin.

"Poor Waring!" sighed the woman with the lilylike hands.

"When do you start, Stephen?"

"Start where?" I asked, knowing even before I spoke that the

last line between me and my base had been cut.
"For the Skokeen Valley," she said with her incontrovertible quietness.

It was only self-preservation, when so surrounded, to throw up one's hands and surrender.

"How about the first of the month?" I parried, wondering why her smile somehow made me think of a razor-blade buried in rose-

"You have so little to tie you down," she reminded me.

"But after all, Daulis, a four-thousand-mile trip up there at this time of year-" I began.

"It will mean so much more, if it's you who brings him back," e interrupted. "The others have all been wonderful, Stephen, she interrupted. but you've been more than wonderful."

She gave me her eyes, still with the luminous light burning behind them. It was for eyes like that, I felt, that the Trojan War was once fought. But one can't cross a continent as casually as one crosses Madison Square.

"I will do anything, my dear, that you want," I was human

enough to assert.

"Then couldn't you get away by Monday or Tuesday?" she said as her cat-footed manservant came to remove the tea-things.

It impressed me, as I got to my feet, as suspiciously like for-

tifying oneself against unexpected but inevitable surgery.
"I'll do my best, Daulis," I said as she let her hand rest in mine for a moment. "'What thou bid'st, unargued I obey,'" I added as I stooped over those nestling fingers. But she wasn't the type of woman, I remembered, to know her Milton.

T had looked, on the map, like a long jump from the Atlantic seaboard to the banks of the Skeena. But that journey, I found, could be effected with little of the heroizing demands for which I had secretly fortified myself. A lordly train, with cut flowers on the lamp-strewn tables of its dining-car, carried me across the autumnal glory of the northern Canadian prairie and into the still greater glory of the eternal Rockies. At Fort George, it is true, I caught sight of two mounted policemen in their scarlet tunics, and a little farther along the Fraser I beheld an insouciant cub-bear racing our vestibuled limited along the valley-bottom. But I journeyed on, when I could get the thought of Waring Prudyn out of my head, with a somewhat disheartening degree of comfort.

After landing at Hazelton, however, there was an abrupt change in both my method of travel and my mental attitude toward my surroundings. I seemed, then, to be stepping from one world into another. It was a world quite new to me, a world of wide valleys blue-green with their illimitable armies of pine, brooded over by skies of pale azure and filled with a silence oddly suggestive of a world from which the last trace of life had departed. A dour and wordless Scot named McWhirtle carried me northward in an incredibly dirty motorboat and deposited me on a still dirtier landing that smelled of decayed fish, whence I was escorted by an incommunicable Siwash guide over a mountain trail to a long and narrow lake where I was placed in the tender mercy of two morose and venal half-breeds, who paddled me to the head of the lake and down a debouching stream that twined through a narrowing green valley where even running water seemed without the power of singing.

We then portaged northeastward to a wider stream, along which we pioneered in a pale trance of unreality, with the same ache of silence hanging over our heads and the same spirit of desola-

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Not once, in my presence, did she address herself to Prudyn. Yet his eyes had dwelt on her with a mood of tenderness.

tion deepening about our wake. From there we portaged again into a lake of Brewster green, a lake that seemed to wind endlessly on between wooded slopes of peace. It came to an end, however, on the second day; whereupon the two worthies who had escorted me into the voiceless wilderness gave me to understand they had arrived at the end of their journey. In the second valley to the west, they gutturally intimated, I'd find the lake where the white man lived.

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I watched their departure without regret, for I preferred being alone when I first came face to face with Prudyn. I was armed and equipped to take care of myself, even in that terra incognita of lonely peaks and valleys, and I prided myself on being a bit of a woodsman. But when I camped alone that night and watched the pale-green nimbus of the Northern Lights deepen beyond the immeasurable mountain silences about me, I was oppressed by a sense of loneliness so acute that I had to fight off the absurd impression I was the last man left alive on a burned-out world lost in the infinitude of space.

It was not that the terrain about me was either exceptionally rugged or exceptionally wild. There was, in fact, a parklike finish about it all, a neat cleanness to the pine-needled forest-floor, an orderliness about the serried timber that marched, mournful as monks, up one clean slope and down another, an uncorrupted precision about the fringe of each undulating waterway, pinked and eyeleted with its coves and its islands, like the skirt of a Pompadour. It seemed like a country made ready for careless multitudes who, through some ghostly mischance of Fate, had failed to reach the valleyed silence awaiting them. And so compact and unqualified was its desolation, that as I tried to whistle over my fire, that night, the forlorn echo of my own voice seemed an impertinence, like the whimper of a child swallowed up in inverted cathedral vaults. I had looked for rigorous weather, in that latitude and at that time of late autumn, but the limpid mildness of the air reminded me that I was much nearer the Aleutian Current than I had imagined; and twice, during the ensuing three days when I was lost in the mountains, I saw a Chinook arch bridging from one lonely range to another far above me.

For I was indeed lost for three days in that trackless solitude. But on the morning of the fourth day I heard a gunshot far to



Prudyn stopped me, his hand on my arm. It was Nanoosa. Between her

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the west of where I was myself stalking a mountain sheep. So I forgot my quarry and swung about, threading my way down carpeted aisles of moss stippled with pale sunlight, between umberred tree-boles as solemn and clean as church-pillars, without a trace of slash or swamp or underbrush to interfere with my going. It seemed like walking on a Chinese rug, an immense Chinese rug freshly swept. But it brought me out on a Brunswick-green lake between malachite-green mountain-slopes, a lake of pellucid quietness where it would have seemed sacrilege for a fish to jump. But along the clear-cut shore-line I found a dugout, carved and decorated like a totem-pole, and into it I was glad enough to tumble my heavy knapsack and rifle and my own sore-muscled body.

I saw, as I paddled forward, that this Brunswick-green body of water was more like a lazily winding river than a lake. But it impressed me as being not quite earthly. It may have been the stillness that gave it this air of other-worldness. It may have been the story-book neatness of the pine-groves lipping its mirroring rim, the incredible immaculacy of the incredibly widedlung slopes. For when I detected a blue plume of smoke hanging above the malachite green of the pine-tops along a farther slope, it seemed as irruptive as had the earlier gunshot sound across the morning silences. I knew, however, that I was closing in on Waring Prudyn.

Yet I saw no sign of life as I paddled closer to the gently curving shore. I could make out the cabin in the checkered thin sunlight beneath the towering pines. I could see the pile of stove-wood, bleached white, like bones, the larger dugout tied to the bone-white landing, the orderly path that led to the orderly dooryard where three stretching-frames stood against the house-wall and three white garments hung motionless from a clothesline of plaited buckskin. But nothing within that shadow-checkered amphitheater of stillness either stirred or spoke.

I should have been grateful, I felt, as I tied up to the ghostly pale landing-timbers, for the consolation of a dog's howling challenge or the verifying homely crowing of a rooster. Even my footsteps, as I ascended the narrow path, fell disturbingly muffled on the Chinese-rug verdure that carpeted this make-believe silence where God himself seemed to have planted a foot on the soft pedal of life. My pulse quickened, in spite of myself, as I knocked on

the rough door with my rifle-butt. There was no answer to that knock. But I could see the blue smoke-plume coiling indolently up between the pine-tops. So I pushed open the door and peered inside.

In the modified light there I made out an Indian woman, sitting on a wolf-skin at the far end of the shadowy room. She sat there sewing colored beads on a hunting-shirt of fringed buckskin. She sat on her haunches, in an attitude that impressed me as oddly barbaric, so intent on her work that she neither moved nor looked up as I stepped into the cabin. I could see the coppercolored hand as it so quietly and yet so deftly plied the needle threaded with white fiber. I could see the plaited black hair coiled so closely about the lowered head, the bare coffee-brown shoulders above the bodice of fringed doeskin with ochre-colored hieroglyphics along its front, the crossed legs covered by the ridiculous skirt of red calico. She impressed me as something timeless, as neither young nor old, as breathing and yet bloodless, as holding the commonplace confounded with the mysterious.

"Your man," I finally called out, "—where's he?"

She did not answer me. For a moment, and for no more than a moment, she lifted her eyes from her work and let them rest on my person. But they were as limpid and impersonal as the eyes of a leopard behind zoo bars. And she went on with her sewing, immured in that immense silence which was beginning to be a strain on the nerves. She made me think of an idol, as she sat there, a pagan idol touched with tribal mysteries beyond my comprehension.

So I stepped back, to break the spell, and stared methodically about the room. It was not unlike other rooms I had seen along the outer fringes of civilization. It held a sheet-iron stove and a dish-cupboard, gray-blanketed sleeping-bunks, a gun-rack, an oil lamp, floor-rugs of wolf-skin. What marked it apart from the others, however, was a calculated neatness, a timeless orderliness like that of the woodlands in which it was set, as though nothing there could have a history, as though nothing there had been touched by the tangled destinies of men. It impressed me as a place singularly complete in itself, as complete and self-contained as an island in mid-ocean.

I was still staring about that silent illahee when I heard a step at the door, a heavy step that came to a still heavier pause and



knees she held a tom-tom. "Can you go back that far?" I quietly inquired.

made it hard for me to confront the startled eyes I knew to be on me.

"Where in hell did you drop from?" I heard the familiar voice demand, in a tone much milder than I had looked for.

I swung about, at that, and stared into the bearded face of Waring Prudyn. He seemed deeper-chested, more grimly lethargic, more casually sure of himself, than of old. frown of troubled thought on his bronzed face as he restored his rifle to the gun-rack and motioned me into a chair of split cedarboughs. Yet he seemed the only positive thing in that world of pale neutralities.

"I was sent for you," I told him, compelling myself to meet the gaze of his oddly animalized eyes.

He laughed, at that, a noncommittal and barricading laugh with-

out much mirth in it, as he sat down on a split-log stool.
"I was afraid they'd be doing that," he admitted, frowning again. He took out a pipe and a moose-hide tobacco-bag and began to smoke. What most impressed me, at the moment, was the quickness with which he recovered his serenity and the completeness with which he ignored the Indian woman within a biscuit-toss of his shoepacks.

"Could you expect them not to?" I inquired, emulating his offhandedness by reaching for my own pipe and tobacco. But my fingers were tremulous with an excitement I could not altogether

understand.

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"How's Daulis?" he asked, without answering my question or waiting for me to answer his. "She knows I'm not dead, of course?

"Yes, she knows," I admitted.

Both Prudyn and I, at that moment, felt the eyes of the sewing woman lift and sweep him with their silent glance. The squaw man turned a little on his stool, so that he no longer faced her.

'Who's that?" I demanded, with a nod toward the immobile bronze figure.

"That's Nanoosa," he answered through the coiling blue smoke. "D'you mean she's your-your woman?" I asked with all the deliberation at my command.

'She ought to be," was Prudyn's curt retort. "I bought her for a repeating rifle and four blankets."

"Oh, God, what a mix-up!"

I don't know whether I said that aloud or whether I gave it expression through the unwilled gesture of my hands. But Prudyn laughed again, and then grew suddenly sober.

"Watch your step," he quietly warned me. "I've been trying to teach her a little English."

"But how are you going to watch your step," I demanded, "after wading into a mess like this?"

I could feel his eyes, his remote and slightly scornful eyes, studying my face.

"I regard it as more of a deliverance than a mess," his coolnoted voice informed me.

"A deliverance from what?" I challenged.

"From all the things it's a sort of rapture to be without," he said with unlooked-for solemnity.

That both shocked and angered me.

"You don't mean to say you're-you're satisfied with this sort of thing?" I asked with a glance about the illahee. That glance did not fail to include the swart figure bent over its beadwork. 'Quite," he said with the utmost simplicity.

"And that means you've no intention of going back?" I demanded, wondering why he should find amusement in my bewilderment.

Why should I go back?" he countered.

"You seem to have forgotten about Daulis," I reminded him.
"That's just the point," was his disturbingly even reply. "I haven't forgotten about Daulis, about what she is and what she stands for!

"Couldn't we at least remain respectful?" I icily suggested.

"With that type?" he demanded.

"There are a few of us," I informed him, "who consider her perfect."

"A few of you?" he scoffed. "There were a damned sight too many of you! And that's what made her so—so everlastingly institutional. Being married to her was a trifle too much like being married to the Metropolitan Museum or the Mall in Central Park.

"While you, apparently, were looking for undivided and per-sonal devotion!" I observed, with a glance at the sewer on the

Prudyn disregarded that taunt. The (Continued on page 142)

He confronted Niobe and threatened her with his fist, roaring: "Shtop—shtop! You—Jazzabel!"



lllustrated by Arthur I. Keller



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No other novel of the twelve Mr. Hughes has written and published in this magazine has drawn forth so many letters from readers as this. They come from all over the world, Australia, South Africa, and the near-by ports of the East where Americans dwell, praiseful most of them, censorious a few, but in every instance reflective of the deep interest the story has developed among its readers.

The Story So Far:

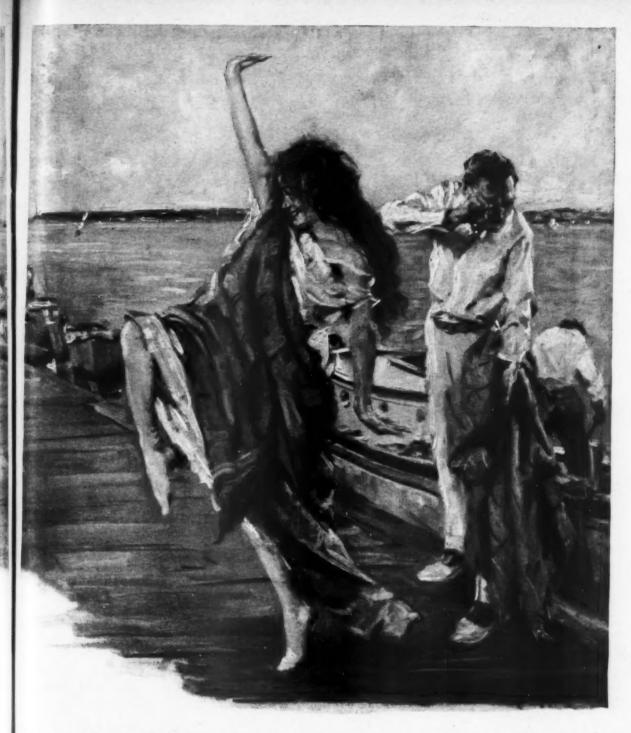
FROM a sky above the sky, two angels mused in displeasure upon the anthill antics of the creatures of earth. Two humans caught their especial attention: a woman known as Niobe Fenn, who enjoyed youth, beauty and riches, yet paced in frantic restlessness her sumptuous room; and a poor young man called Joel Kimlin, who lay in ambush above a country road, watching with rifle poised, for an enemy he hardly knew.

It chanced that God passed by, and noting the humor of the angels, He was moved to say: "Descend, then, to the earth, and inhabit, each of you, the body of one of my creatures, and learn

what it is to go to and fro in the earth.'

This Niobe, whom the angels had watched, had been motoring with her suitor Bret Rattoon that day. "I want to die," she had said to him—this girl who had youth, beauty and wealth. "What is there to want? What's the good of anything?" That night

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the Angel of Derision, entering the room where Niobe slept, bade the soul of Niobe begone, then crept into the empty tenement.

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That same day young Joel Kimlin had been chosen to avenge the death of his kinsman in a feud battle, by killing Josh Tapper. But as he waited with his rifle over a log, he fell asleep. And here the Angel of Scorn found him and dispossessed his unresisting soul.

And so came about Joel's strange meeting with Niobe Fenn. For she had sought to drive her car fast enough to escape boredom and Bret Rattoon; and her flight ended only when she and her car went over a cliff together. Joel, plodding the path below, saw the catastrophe; hailing a passing farmer, he brought a hay wagon for ambulance, and accompanied her in search of succor-which presently arrived in the person of Bret Rattoon, who whirled her surgeonward in his car.

In town Joel found a revival meeting in progress, and was

moved to attend it in company with his sorry pretty sweetheart Hilda. The evangelist won both these young people, but poor Hilda was murdered next day by a drunken farmer and died in ghastly terror of hellfire.

Brooding over Hilda's fate, Joel became convinced that Niobe also was in peril of eternal torment, and that he must save her. So he tramped to the Fenn country place, but while Niobe was interested in the strange youth, his religious fervor did not impress her, and finally he departed in wrath.

Homeless, Joel wandered; presently he found asylum at a pri-vate school for boys, where he received instruction and lodging in exchange for odd jobs. But when he came upon a newspaper picture of Bret and Niobe at a summer resort, he left the school and made his way to the seaside dwelling of the Fenns'. came about that Joel and Bret again were called upon together to

rescue Niobe: for when her canoe sank offshore, Joel plunged in to swim to her, and Bret strove desperately to slow down the speed-boat he was racing. (The story continues in detail;)

HE Fates take their comedy in its crudest form. It amused THE Fates take their comedy in its crudest rolling their primeval minds to tease Niobe to death between two rescuers, one of whom could not move fast enough and the other not slow enough.

Joel swam as if he were burrowing through sand that gave him only obstacle and not support. He must reach out and lay hold on the water and drag himself across it by sheer pull. And the effort taxed his breath so heavily that his aching lungs seemed a

pair of broken, leaking and squeaking bellows.

Fear was an even greater torment than weariness, for he dared not even turn back. Caution made him glance over his shoulder, and the shore looked as far away and as tiny as another world. The people back there were insects dancing in the sun and altogether indifferent to his existence.

He threw himself high on an overhand lunge, and Niobe seemed still farther away than the shore. She had ceased to scream and

was threshing the water with leaden arms.

The frantic congress of Joel's faculties was in an uproar. It was a plain matter of common sense. Why go on, when it meant that both he and Niobe must drown? He could perhaps just barely save himself if he turned back. If he forged ahead, two would certainly die. Wasn't it better to save one than to lose two? It was compellingly simple. There was only one safe thing to do: swim back. So he kept on.

He was assured now that he would perish. But this made him rather glad than sad. For he was so tired that it would be heaven just to quit fighting the water and give himself to the depths, to drift down and down and down. A little strangling, a

writhing-an everlasting holiday.

Niobe was in that very mood too. She had kicked and beaten the water, choked and swallowed it, till her throat within was a She had torn her hat free, and reaching down, wrenched off her slippers. But the water was deathly cold. Her flesh ached from it. and she was so mad to scramble out of it that she could not restrain herself.

When Bret, raging past, flung her a life-preserver, she was so frantic to lay hold on it that it slipped from her clutch, and the wave she set up with her leap pushed it out of her reach. She made a try at it then, but the expense in pain was too great. It was as if all her bones were broken and all her sinews torn loose. Yet she continued to battle her way toward it, and it danced away from her finger-tips with elfin malice.

Bret's boat was a lean shark charging her in rushes that carried him past her, with sharp returns in ellipses of a shortening axis.

He always returned. But he always went past.

All that he could send her was waves to frolic across her mad eyes. When she sank, the roar of the propellers of his boat under the water beat upon her with a submarine thunder diminishing only a little as she returned to the air, to the green froth-spewing welter, the tumbling waste of blue sky-everything tossing, indifferent; nothing to cling to, nobody to offer her help.

As her lungs agonized for air, her eyes fought by themselves for light, but were filled with water till she could hardly make out at first what it was that darkled on the blinding waves before her.

It was Joel. He came to her like a ghost that swims. His face, gaunt with the depletion of all his powers, rolled and sank, and the water ran in and out of his gaping lips as if they were the scuppers of a derelict. His eyes were glazed. He was sick, nauseated with the first bitter draft of death.

N IOBE looked at him with amazement through the wet strands of her hair. There was nothing but turbulence in her brain, and the archives of her memory were a library of Louvain in which fire and whirlwind were playing havoc and scattering the air with torn-out pages.

The angel in Niobe was very close to the end of its earthly sojourn, on the very brink of the Paradise it had left; yet it had no thought of Paradise, no memory. The angel had nothing to

do with the battle, except as a dazed bystander.

Niobe was already drowned. She was only a vortex of instincts fighting against this smothering ruinous foreign element, only a complex engine still driving its wheels around and around and wrecking itself with its own powers. Her arteries pounded and knocked, and her hands were paddles that sank and came up to

Yet from this frantic machinery there sprang an antenna of remembrance that touched Joel, and by something familiar, yet more miraculous than all miracles, brought not only him but herself back to reality. She knew him for the man who had saved her when she fell from the cliff and broke her bones on the rigid earth. She remembered life now. She had lived. She might live again.

But she sank and was again only a choking, a smothering, a struggling, a blurred riot of energies. She rose once more, and Joel's face was again a bugle to reassemble all her selves. was a woman again. He was a man. He was the man who had wanted to save her soul from hell. He was trying once more. He would fail again, but-what if his story of the everlasting burning-ghat were true? She was in for a long torture!

Joel must snatch the girl at least from the pit's brink. hunched forward with one last backward thrust of his aching arms and slid alongside. He put a hand out to her and thought he had rescued her. From his weary lungs came a cry of exult-

But the sea ran into his mouth and silenced it. He threshed about suffocating, and found Niobe's arms in his way. He kicked, and her legs were in his way. He struck his elbow into her tender breast, and that hurt him worse than a dagger in his own.

Thinking of him as a strong rescuer, Niobe tried to cling to him. She set her hands on his shoulders to lift herself high enough, long enough, for one deep breath of all-precious dry air. But he went under beneath her and she realized that he brought no hope with him

He tore from his lungs words that fairly bled:

"It's no-it's no use! I can't help you, hon-hon-honey. Let's die togeth-together!'

And a little wave like a peal of laughter broke across his face in a spray of white froth and ran merrily down his throat and became poison. He sank with his eyes closed, but he tried to clasp Niobe to his bosom.

Her muscles fought his embrace by instinct as they would have fought him anywhere, but especially now that his arms meant death. She beat him with knees and nails, and wriggled till as suddenly as a slippery eel she eluded him. The moment she was free, her good heart revolted at the sight of so brave a fool being dragged under by the unseen devil-fish of depth. She caught him under the arms and flung herself backward to pry him from the tentacles of the water. She drank in a great gulp, and a cough flailed her. When the paroxysm was over, Joel had slipped from her hands and disappeared. She had no more fight in her. Her engines had gone dead. She was nobody. She floated down through the sunlit deeps, and the fish wondered at her.

WHEN Bret's boat slipped past the spot, he called to the engineer: "There's a man in there too. Get him."

By now he had kicked off his shoes and whipped away his coat. and he drove himself headfirst into the water like a harpoon. When his impetus was gone, and he began to rise, he forced his head down and pulled himself farther and farther into the water. Keeping his eyes open, he peered through the liquid glass, and

swam hither and yon with lungs cracking.

He made out a blur, and whirling on himself like an otter, clutched at the water to keep from being thrown up to the surface. His last fierce thrust carried him so far that he found his hands in Niobe's hair, and throwing his head high, let the water

expel him upward to the surface.

He came out under his own boat and grazed it with his skull as he emerged. The engineer, who was running along the rail. boathook in hand, trying to descry Joel, helped Bret hoist Niobe's dripping body aboard. As it came from the water, it grew suddenly vastly heavier, but he made it, then reached his hand to Bret, who came swarming up and began like Michael the angel to wrestle with the devil for Niobe's soul.

The unconscious hulk of Joel bobbed to the surface and would have sunk again if the engineer had not caught it with his hook and hauled him to the side of the boat like a gaffed porpoise. It took the engineer's last ounce of steam to bring Joel up and spill

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his flopping limbs along the deck.

Then he began to imitate upon Joel what Bret was performing upon the soulless form of Niobe. Her members, that had been so graceful and vivacious, might have belonged now to a dummy stuffed with straw, the sort of effigy that people used to hang. Water streamed from her, and her face was not pretty.

Bret was terrified and trembling with love of what she had been and what she would be again if he could set her machinery going again. But he toiled over her exactly as he had worked at the batteries of his power-boat when the engine had gone dead once in a squall, and the waves flung water in upon him, and he could



O'Dowd wriggled out of Joel's embrace in time to receive a blow on the side of the head. He went over onto a divan of sponges,

not get a spark to vitalize the wires and start the explosions that made the boat a steed of glorious velocity.

It II

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The motorboat bobbed and careened and slewed in an even sea. A passenger-steamer went by, crowded with excursionists who stared and wondered if murder were being done, but gave no aid. Their only message was a wake of high waves that pitched the boat a little higher.

Weary and afraid, Bret forced his aching arms and his woebegone heart to continue. Sometimes he grew so impatient that he quickened his rhythm, but the engineer called over to him: "Easy does it." The engineer could be calm; he was dealing with a man and a stranger. The problem was to start the air-pump and the blood-pump in the engine-houses of the two bodies. It was like starting a car on a frosty morning by turning the motor over and over until it took up the rhythm and began to sputter and chug.

Long after they were drained of the smothering water, Niobe's lungs refused their office. But at last there was a little sound like a gasp. Then it was lost, but it gave Bret new hope. He fought again with the stubborn reluctant dynamo, and again there was a response. At length a little sigh, a pitiful moan, a muffled cry like the first wail of a newborn infant rescued from drowning

in its mother's deeps. Niobe was being born again. She was terribly tired, and, as it were, lazy. She was as unwilling to reënter life as an overworked factory girl to rise at the morning factory whistle.

Her lover, however, was ruthless. He would not let her sleep. It hurt him bitterly to belabor her so heartlessly, but he would not give her up again.

At last she was alive. He had dragged her from the grave. He spoke to her and kissed her and turned her round into his arms, kneeling by her and weeping over her. It was safe to weep a little. She was taken with a mortal chill as if her en-

She was taken with a mortal chill as if her engines were shaking her to pieces. The only strength she seemed to have was in this power that rattled her bones till her teeth were like castanets.

He tore her arms away, ran into the little cabin of the boat, ripped blankets from the bed he kept there, and returning, swaddled her in them heavily and carrying her to a long chair, extended her in the sun and chafed her hands and then her feet after stripping them of the sodden stockings.

As he strove to rekindle her fires, he glanced back at Joel, and for the first time realized who it was that the engineer had been trying to save.

Bret began to laugh a bit hysterically. He could not imagine how Joel got there. The fellow was a regular *Hawkshaw*, always bobbing up and always making trouble.

It would hardly be just to say that he was tempted to call the engineer away from Joel and tell him to take the boat ashore. He did realize that Niobe ought to be turned over to a doctor. There was always grave danger of pneumonia or heart-failure.

Still, there was something in Bret's soul that made it impossible for him to let Joel die, even at the risk of endangering Niobe. In any case, Bret resolved to save Joel because Joel was his deadly rival. He combined his sportsmanship with his devotion to Niobe. He said to the engineer:

"Go start your motor and put in as fast as you can. I'll work on that feller."

The exhausted engineer was glad to be relieved of his chore. Bret replaced him and began to pump Joel's soul back from the dark. He retrieved him shortly, and lacking blankets wrapped him up in a coat and overcoat of his own.

Then he remembered the liquor he carried on board. It was against the law, and if discovered, it meant that his boat was liable to confiscation. This made it the more imperative for a man like Bret to keep a supply of it for his friends.

Bret brought forth a bottle of whisky, poured out a glassful and forced it down the throat of Niobe, who coughed and choked as if she swallowed liquid fire, but began to glow at once. He made her take another, for all her squeals.

He forced the edge of a filled glass between the chattering teeth of Joel and emptied it into his gullet despite his struggles. Joel asked for a second drink, and got it, a big one. At once the whisky began to adulterate the soul of Joel, kindling it to a maniac truculence, though the same distillation filled Niobe with a silly and reckless hilarity.

Bret had barely time to toss off a glass himself and hide the bottle, before the motorboat grided against the pier.

An exhibition was now to follow of the strange and enormous differences between the actions of the human soul when submerged in a mixture of two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen, and its actions when suspended in a solution of two parts of carbon, five of hydrogen and another part of hydrogen attached to a part of oxygen—a complex known as alcohol and combined by the distillation of a grain mash.

The reactions of the two souls of Niobe and Joel were as different as if they had been dissolved in utterly different chemicals.

Chapter Twenty-one

BY the time the boat had been made fast, a crowd had gathered, though the drama of the rescue had attracted no more notice than a mid-air battle of seagulls over a fish. It was the blanketed



"I'll keep it out of the paper if I have to buy the dirty sheet," growled Bret.

figure of Niobe, and Joel in Bret's overcoat, that caught the eye of the first few observers. Their running and staring set up a contagion in the multitude.

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A few recognized Niobe, and her name ran along the lips like the sputtering of a fuse. She who had always been the fashionplate and the one who paid least heed to strangers, came before them now in a ludicrous bundle and in a mood of as much love for the great People as a politician boasts on an election platform.

Giggling and waddling along the deck, Niobe beat her fingertips against her lips and howled the traditional war-whoop of an Indian. The long, tremulous "Oo-oo-oo-oo!" startled the spectators, but her antics were more startling. She caught the blankets up to her knees and gave a burlesque of an Indian war-dance, bending far over and hoisting her feet in flat-footed awkwardness



and waving an imaginary tomahawk. Then she called to the staring audience:

"Me heap big blanket-squaw! Wah-whoo-wah!"

She acted as one possessed of a devil, with all her suppressed mischiefs let loose from a heart like an opened Pandora's box, and all the modesties of long breeding gone.

She terrified Bret, who had never seen her so, and he almost died of vicarious shame for her. He could imagine how she would feel when she came to her senses and learned what she had done. There is no surprise like the bewilderment of a soul that has gone off on a spree and returned to ponder the wreckage it has made.

Bret tried to provide Niobe with the restraints she lacked for her own protection. He seized her arm and tried to hurry her ashore and through the gantlet of staring mockers. But she would not endure the grip of his hand or the propulsion of his arm.

It did no good to urge her, and he pretended to ignore her; he tried to laugh with her and could hardly keep from sobbing, for she was very precious to him, very wonderful.

A discrepant miracle of alcohol had turned Joel into a surly varlet. A black storm-cloud filled his mind as he meditated the repeated humiliations that Bret Rattoon had subjected him to.

Joel had failed to save Niobe and had left her and himself to be saved by this same smirking fiend. Bret had whipped him with ease and rescued him with contempt. And Bret was an impious damned aristocrat with all the vices of the predatory interests, while Joel was a downtrodden representative of the great American protelariat, or however you pronounce it

As if that were not bad enough, this Rattoon had given liquor to Niobe and made a fool of her, while he himself, who had drained two glasses and remained sober; had offered Niobe salvation. She had rejected his salvation and accepted degradation.

Her laughter horrified him, and he could have strangled her for her own soul's sake. He glared at her so dourly that even she felt his mood through the fog that sogged her brain. But everything was ridiculous in Niobe's present mood.

Bret felt that he must be brutal to be kind; he caught Niobe's elbow in his and tried to hustle her along the pier, but she swung backward like a Bacchante carried off by a satyr, and beckoned to Joel.

When Joel refused to be beckoned, she winked at Bret, and looked as winsome as a ghoul in his devoted eyes. Then she turned to the encircling strangers, who betrayed their own souls by their varied responses to her exploitation of her hidden possibilities. One laughed uproariously; one laughed timidly with an effort to humor her; one scowled with disgust; one murmured: "The poor thing! How pitiful!"

Buffeting Bret's hands aside and mocking his low prayers to come home, she began a gruesome series of postures and steps. She became a Mænad of grape-drenched revelry, and leaping high, flung her head far back till her (Continued on page 124)

By Cale Young Rice

nvironment

Illustrated by Everett Shinn

Those who have followed the trend of American poetry during the past fifteen years are of course familiar with the name of Cale Young Rice, whose contributions to American verse and poetic drama in this generation are many and distinguished. And here is not verse but fiction, a tragedy written out of the devouring East, with which its author has become familiar through occasional venturings from his Kentucky home.

BECAUSE 1 prefer peace and freedom from feminine complications, I am a bachelor. My friends know this, and Stanley Fetter knew it. Yet here was his letter, an undisguised appeal, asking me to stop over in Mukden on my way to Peking! It meant giving up two days at Seoul, whose theatrical mountains, and citizens strolling about in gauzy top-hats, amused me, so I swore.

You know Mukden? Naturally. But did you ever arrive there after dark and get off on the platform amid swarming coolies and shrouded Mongols—bandits by the looks of them—with no white man about? Did you sleep in one of the station bedrooms, startled every hour from a back-breaking mattress by the unintelligible jargon without, a jargon whose written characters, seen by day, vriggled nightmarishly before your eyes? If so you will understand my asininity in not letting the Fetters know of my arrival, even though I had never met Millie Fetter, Stanley's wife, and knew little about her.

The black mood I got up in the next morning was increased by a premonition that the day was going to be as diabolical as the night. Also, as I shaved in a pint of cold water, I told myself the usual lie of poor sleepers, that I had not slept an hour.

You don't believe in premonitions? Well, neither do I—in other people's; but this one was mine. I drank the venomous-looking brew brought me for coffee, therefore, as if it were calamity; and immediately I was taken by an alarming thought. Women who stay in the East any length of time often get queer. Was I to be let in for an illustration of it? Was Stanley Fetter going to consult me concerning his wife?

If there had been a train to Peking at that moment, I would have boarded it, bag and baggage. Since there was none, I contented myself with putting off seeing Stanley until afternoon. Meanwhile, I thought a drive through the city might serve to quiet my disgruntled alarm, and so I got into a decrepit carriage, againg at the door, and content of the content of the

sagging at the door, and started off.

The food-shops along the way smelled indescribably Oriental, and were brown with September dust, as were the strings of "cash" hung from the low eaves of the cash-shop roofs. The fantastic advertisements,—effigies of boots and clothing among them,—all inscribed with the wriggling characters that had gotten on my nerves so in the night, were also covered over. My drive through the alien streets to the old city walls, to the river with its outlandish cargo-junks, and to Ping Chieh with its decaying bell-tower, oppressed me therefore with the further conviction that this was no place for Millie Fetter. She was, I had heard, a pretty, pleasure-loving blonde, and it was preposterous of Stanley to bring her to this heathendom, where she would only have

for society a half-dozen consular pairs—most of them without any English.

After luncheon, and a siesta, to which a portly man of my years is entitled, I set out to discover the Fetters. I found them living—of all places!—in a done-over Chinese temple: the kind with a pai-lou in front, about the base of whose dragon columns squatted grotesque "heaven-dogs." The whole affair was better suited as the habitation for the "devils" and "evil spirits" it was built to exorcise, than for sensible people. It would have made an atheist superstitious—or worse.

Stanley Fetter's offices, I learned, were inside the compound, and were a part of the yellow-tiled temple itself. His Chinese clerk Yuan—the usual victim of English *l's* and *r's*—received me. "Mlista Flette?" he kowtowed, hands in his sleeves. "I call him." And having thus tripped over the consonants, he proceeded, in backing out, to do as much for the furniture.

I was still glancing at the filing-cases in the room, and at the Chinese paintings over them, when Stanley entered from the inner court on which the room opened. So shocked was I by his appearance that I hardly noticed his failure to indulge in the "Good of you to come," amenity, and that he almost forgot to offer me a cigar, that preliminary rite to all male conversation.

His athletic figure, which I had more than once envied, drooped hopelessly. The thin, somewhat ascetic oval of his face, scarred on the left brow, was darkly shadowed. His eyes were dim-lit stages across which tragedy had evidently been stalking; and from them one got the impression that he had lost something he could never recover—or had found something, infinitely desired, which could never be his. Sometimes, too, they seemed to be looking out and far away, sometimes at a nearer dread.

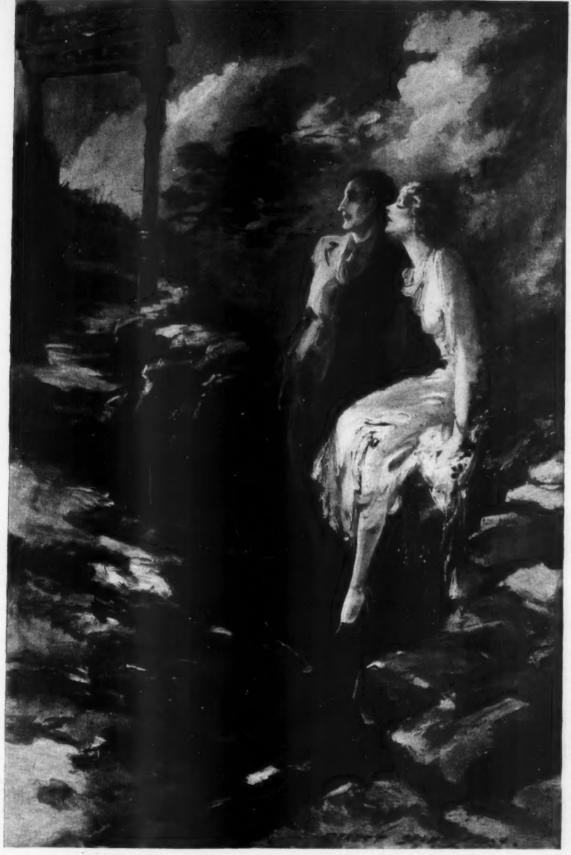
OUR conversation about trivialities soon hung fire.
"How's Millie?" I then asked, dropping the "Mrs.," though
I had intended to be strictly and defensively formal.

His brows knit 'slowly and painfully. "It's about her," he said, with the reticence of a man unaccustomed to confide his affairs, "that I've asked you to come. She—doesn't like it out here"

"Nothing wrong with her intelligence, then," I replied sardonically, flicking the ash of my cigar into the mouth of a little bronze demon on his desk.

He looked out across the gray, flagged court to where, no doubt, Mrs. Millie was.

"We ought not to have moved to Mukden, and she should go away at once—home or anywhere," he continued. "But," he added, with dull distress, "she wont."



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At an unexpected turn in the path just a hundred yards or so ahead were Millie and Frank.

Yuan brought the water, and when Ellen had drunk it, she began to speak. "I must tell her," she said. "There was trouble-"

As I did not intend to let myself in for any morbid marital nonsense, and as I believed, moreover, in male authority, this was my chance.
"Make her, then," I growled, chewing my cigar.

"That might have been possible six months ago," he answered slowly, "but now it would not be safe."

'Safe?'

"You must understand," he appealed explanatorily. "Things have changed since we left France, where, as you know, I was stationed for two years. She was contented enough there; Marseilles is fairly gay, and the Riviera fairly near.

"On the other hand, in Nagasaki, to which I was called next, it was pretty dull for her, I supposeat first. There were few tourists through the fall and winter, and little society. She moped and would only occupy herself with poring over Parisian fashion-plates."

"To make gowns to wear in Mukden, where in your wisdom you've brought her?" I injected sarcastically, though hardly out of sympathy for Mrs. Millie.

He ignored my tone, but replied with poignant quietness

"She had plenty of chance to wear them in Nagasaki-after the Whartons came.

This was not self-explanatory, and I was about to inform him so, irritably, when a memory bobbed up in my brain.

"The Frank Whartons?" I exclaimed; for in Seoul they had told me of a beautiful young Californian who, bent on being a missionary, had refused to marry any young man who would not come with her to "the foreign field."

He read the run of my thoughts, and explained in

assent:

"They came to Nagasaki three months before we

"And Mrs. Millie," I said, with a tone that should have been reserved for my own obtuseness, "fell a victim to the lady's charms? She caught the missionary fever herself?"

He rose and faced me squarely.

"She found Frank Wharton too attractive from the first," he avowed bluntly; but added at once: "Yet why not? I was preoccupied, and hard at work, as was Ellen Wharton. Frank, on the other hand,

was not only handsome, but light-hearted and gay
—like Millie herself; and his wife's beauty of soul was lost on

"We had met, you see, by accident, and Millie invited them to tea. An intimacy sprang up, and as my work for the Oil Company relaxed, the four of us began to take long walks to shrines back in the hills-Millie with Frank-and we would often go by different paths, agreeing to meet farther on.

"Then one day"—he seemed to be dispassionately seeing it all again as he spoke—"we went farther back into the hills than usual—and again by different paths. It was summer. The people were out on pilgrimage. They thronged about those shrines where they were accustomed to hang paper love-prayers on trees by the torii. And the sky was so blue and buoyant that I felt as if earth were a blossom floating through space. Ellen's talk, too, though it was only of a kindergarten she wished to establish, seemed very charming.

"At an unexpected turn in the path, however, we paused and looked up suddenly. Just a hundred yards or so ahead were Mil-

lie and Frank; and as we looked—they were in each other's arms."
"My dear Stanley!" I broke in deprecatingly, but got no farther. He stood there waiting to resume, and did so without bitterness, but as a surgeon might who has been compelled to

operate on his own wife.
"We turned back. Ellen did not speak of the encounter; nor did I. She was very pale, and her dark hair made



her seem more so, but she went superbly on discussing her

"We walked home. . . . Late in the afternoon Millie returned, elated. Where did we go, she asked; and how had they missed us? They had looked everywhere for us and had inquired at all the tea-houses! My excuse, that Ellen had found herself unequal to the walk and had wished to turn back, quite satisfied her. She went trilling to her piano, which she had not opened for weeks, and which looked out over the bay-toward the Whartons.

As he paused I exclaimed: "Damned right of you, then, to bring her here to Mukden! She deserves a bit of chastening!'

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He shook his head. The shadows under his eyes deepened. "It didn't happen so," he continued. "A letter which came from Ellen Wharton two days later was responsible for that. They were leaving Japan immediately, it said, for a new field in Mongolia.

"Millie, who read it first, was stunned. 'This is from the Whartons,' she said, angry and dazed. 'They are leaving Japan—suddenly—today. They send us good-by!' She handed it to

"I dislike judging people, so I merely remarked of necessity: 'We can hardly be surprised, can we?'

"The most violent words could scarcely have had a more startling effect on her. After a rigid moment of surprise, her rage



burst forth. That was it, was it! I had seen something and had told Ellen, had I? The pair of us had plotted to separate her and Frank, had we? Well, we shouldn't! She loved him, and he She didn't care who knew it! Ellen might take loved her! him away-like a coward-but that didn't matter! It merely meant that he was too chivalrous to let her go alone. But we

Stanley paused again. Perhaps, indeed, he had told me as much as he thought necessary of his-as yet-undefined purpose. But it chanced that circumstances themselves were to finish the nar-

rative.

For as he looked up from under desperately troubled brows, he beheld Millie herseif across the courtyard, in front of her bedroom door. She had on a kimono, and her hair, of glossy gold, hung down on her shoulders. Her face, rather sharply pretty, had a startled expression of hope and terror.

Her gaze, as she stood so, was across at the office where we sat, and toward which, under the influence of swift unheeding emotion, she made her way, calling with regardless eagerness: "Stanley, is that Frank? Has Frank come—at last? Frank, is that you?"

Reaching the door, she stopped, and stood peering in, distraught.

"No, Millie. This is my old friend Porter Preston. You have heard me speak of him. He has just dropped in from Seoul."

Stanley, who had risen, answered her evenly:

I could almost feel her heart sink as she comprehended. And how she managed to recover any measure of self-possession is a mystery. But she did. Smiling and gathering her kimono together, she replied with the right proportion of formality and cordiality:

"Mr. Preston will pardon me, I am sure, and I need not tell him he is welcome, though he comes at a time when we are much troubled about some friends of ours, Frank and Ellen Wharton. They left Japan six weeks ago, Mr. Preston. She is a missionary. They were going to the interior of Mongolia. It was dreadful of the Bishop to send them. He must have known it was dangerous, among all the bandits there. An uprising has occurred. Did you hear anything about it as you came in today?

To reply that I had, that the outbreak was reported as serious and spreading wildly, would, I perceived, be unwise.

"They expect to quell the rascals at once, I believe, Mrs. Fetter," I responded easily. "You must pardon me for blundering in

on you and Stanley so unexpectedly.

"I am sure," she managed, "we are happy to have you, if you can stand our temple. It isn't enlivening. I keep thinking of all the troubles and prayers people have brought to their gods here. There must have been millions, don't you think? Stanley tells me not to think of such things, but he is not superstitious. He didn't want me to come to Mukden. The offer of the post came just after the friends I was telling you about (Continued on page 110)

She leaned forward, exquisitely seductive. "I want you to look in my eyes and see if you can believe them."



Illustrated by F. R. Gruger

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By F. Britte

HE was a stranger to me, but he shook hands with Quentin Quayne like an old acquaintance—a big, heavily built man, with a powerful beak of a nose, and a manner that was massively deliberate. The word or two over the office phone which had preceded his entrance had given me his name-Sir Humphrey Maule. I had a vague notion that I had read it in a newspaper, somewhere, sometime, but the circumstance eluded me.

He sat down in the chair by Quayne's desk, and the latter pushed across to him the cigarette-casket and the cigar-box he kept for hospitality to his visitors. This visitor selected a cigar -selected it with the judicial deliberation of a connoisseursniffed at it, crackled it between his fingers, punctured it meticulously with a gold cigar-piercer.

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"This will be the last cigar I shall smoke as a free man, Quayne," he said quietly, as he reached for the matches.

Q. Q. raised his eyebrows.

"Going back into harness? I thought the Indian Government would be after you again. Moscow is getting far too much of a run for its money south of the Himalayas."

The circumstance flashed back into my mind. Sir Humphrey Maule had retired a few months back after a career in India that had remained unknown to the general public until the chorus of



Diamond

Austin

press encomiums at its conclusion made one aware that yet another great public servant had finished his day's work. Head of a special branch of the Political Department, I remembered.

He sat now, big and impressive, in the chair by Q. Q.'s desk, lighting his cigar. He lit it very carefully and deliberately, assured himself that it was burning evenly, blew out the match and deposited it neatly in the ash-tray before he answered.

"No," he said, curtly sententious. "I'm on my way to give myself up to the police."

Q. Q.'s quick glance challenged his seriousness,

"Income-tax—and a tender conscience?" He smiled quizzically.

RECENTLY this magazine has sent on to Mr. Britten Austin three letters addressed to Quentin Quayne. Strange as it may seem, the assumption that a character of fiction is a flesh-and-blood person is not rare in any editorial experience. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle possesses a bushel of letters addressed to Mr. Sherlock Holmes in which the writers do not indicate in the least degree that to them Holmes was anything but a real person.

Sir Humphrey finished his long puff of cigar-smoke.

"Murder." He sat back in his chair, grimly stolid.

I have rarely seen Q. Q. startled
—but he was startled then, startled
and instantaneously incredulous.

and instantaneously incredulous. "My dear chap! Murder?" Q. Q. puzzled at him.

Sir Humphrey nodded. "Murder."
"But whom? Some would-be assassin?"

"Jimmy Loftus."
"Good heavens!"

Sir Humphrey removed his cigar from his mouth, looked at it, pressed his lips together.

"Yes—my best pal." He spoke through his teeth. I had a hint of an emotion that could not trust itself to words, crushed back behind an iron self-control.

Q. Q. stared at him, frankly shocked and bewildered.

"Jimmy Loftus! But—in the name of everything—why?"
"I wish I knew."

"How-then?"

Sir Humphrey looked at him, spoke slowly and deliberately. "I know—and yet I don't know."

The Chief's hand tapped in exasperation on his desk.

"You are talking in riddles, Maule."

"It is a riddle to me—the whole business." Once more he leaned back in his chair, glanced again at the cigar between his fingers, held it for a long pull at it, a thoughtful slow outblowing of gray smoke. "That's why I've come to you, Quayne. I did it.—I must have done it.—I somehow know I did it, can give you a story of the occurrence, although another part of me is, so to speak, loud in indignant denial—and the circumstantial evidence is beyond doubt. I don't envy my

Sir Humphrey groaned in anguish. "And they must have hypnotized me also! Made me kill poor limmy! That proves it!"

counsel his job of defending me. He hasn't a shred of a case. As an honest man, I should have to say I was guilty if I were asked. It's hanging for me, all right. But-although I shouldn't dream for a moment of putting in the plea.-I'd rather have a quick finish than a living death,-I'd just like to know for my own personal satisfaction whether it oughtn't to be life." He spoke with a grim succinctness, knocked off a little ash from his cigar, and looked straight at Q. Q. "You've solved some pretty queer mysteries, Quayne—we've solved some of them together; as a personal favor, the last probably I shall ask of you, I want you to solve this one for me. When the drop is pulled from under me, I want to go into the next world knowing why I did it.'

Q. Q. looked at him in a silence broken only by the tapping of his finger-tips on the desk. Sir Humphrey met his penetrating glance and answered it with the ghost of a tight-lipped

smile.

"That's precisely the question I am asking you-am I sane?

Q. Q. grunted. "H'm! When and where do you say this occurrence happened?"

"In my rooms—last night."

"And where is"—Q. Q. hesitated, delicately

"Loftus—now?"

"In my sitting-room. Behind a locked door. I sent my man off for the day. He doesn't

sleep on the premises, you know.

"H'm! No immediate hurry for the police, then." Q. Q., I could see, was seriously perturbed, but he spoke with an unemotional selfcontrolled calm that matched that of his visitor. "You ask me if you are sane. You appear sane enough to me. But any of us, given the circumstances-and I know nothing of your mental states, the stresses you have perhaps put on yourself, during the past year or two-may develop hallucinations that have all the force of reality. You may be under a hallucination now. On what evidence do you think you killed Jimmy Loftus?'

Sir Humphrey smiled again, grimly.

"On the evidence of all my senses, Quayne. There is no hallucination about this. I woke up at seven o'clock this morning to find myself in my own sitting-room, still in my dressclothes, and to see Jimmy Loftus, also in his evening kit, sitting crumpled in a chair with a bullet-wound in his head. My own revolver was lying on the floor, one chamber recently discharged. I had a smear of burnt powder on the fingers of my right hand. More than that,

I had suddenly an overpowering conviction—I had a queer vivid mental picture of the act—that I had myself shot him. "Without a motive?" Q. Q. interjected the question.

"Without the slightest motive. Jimmy and I were the closest pals—the nearest thing I ever had to a brother. You can guess my horror at what I saw." Sir Humphrey's grim mouth clenched tight again for a moment.

"H'm! You remember doing it, you say?"
"Yes—in a queer sort of way. Half of me protests violently that I did not, could not do it. Yet if I were challenged, I could not help but say, with full conviction, automatically-ghastly and motiveless as the thing is: 'Yes, I did it.' In fact there's an immense and curious impulse in me-the usual murderer's impulse, I suppose-to rush out and proclaim the fact."

"That was why you were going to the police-station?"

Sir Humphrey shrugged his shoulders.

"You can't expect a man of my stamp to give himself the



ignominy of dodging the police. There's the fact. I must take the consequences. I prefer to meet them halfway. It leaves me some personal dignity, at any rate.'

'H'm!" Q. Q. grunted, sat for a moment in thought, his eyes still probing the big man who sat in that chair savoring his cigar.

"Why was Jimmy Loftus in your rooms last night?"
"We'd had a little dinner-party."
"A party? There were others, then?"

"Two. But they left soon after eleven."

"Who were they?"

"A Russian-refugee aristocrat-Count Murovieff-and his

daughter, Countess Stravinsky.' Q. Q. leaned back in his chair, tapped his finger-tips together. "Let's have the whole yarn, Maule. Why did you have those three people to dinner last night? It must have been something important to have brought Loftus out. I know for a fact he's been working late hours on some Bolshevik conspiracy to sabotage

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the coal-mines. He hasn't left his department any night before nine o'clock for a week.'

Sir Humphrey nodded.
"Quite right. He hasn't. I can't think those two people could possibly have had anything to do with it—as I told you, they went about eleven, left Jimmy and me alone together—but I'll give you the whole story from A to Z." He paused to revive the glow of his cigar, to collect his thoughts for a commencement. "There's something in your guess about the Indian Government, Quayne. I have been approached—I'd more than half promised to go out again, in fact. Naturally, I began to sit up and take a little notice of things Indian again, to look around for scraps of useful information. About ten days ago I met a couple of very interesting people-met them at my sister's house-this Count Murovieff and his daughter, regular aucien régime, red-hot anti-Bolsheviks. It was the lady I got into conversation with first, a fascinating creature, beautiful,—thirty years ago, one glance of

those eyes of hers would have set me gaping round after her like an imbecile,-and she did me the honor of knowing my name. A

compliment rare enough to be appreciated."

He smiled grimly. "She asked me if I were going back to India. I gave a noncommittal sort of answer-as you know, I'm not the sort that unbosoms himself to casual ladies. And then I had a shock. 'Because if you are, Sir Humphrey,' she said, 'I can give you some information that will be of the greatest use to you. Would you like to put your finger on Tretiakeff?' You can guess I sat up pretty sharply and took quite a lot of notice, at that. Only the very inner circles know even the name of Tretiakeff—a most elusive bird, and the hidden manipulator of all the Soviet intrigues in India. At that moment, her father came up a white-haired, intellectual-looking little dwarf of a man, more like a professor than an aristocrat. She introduced us-and then my sister swooped down on us-mustn't have any interesting conversation in her drawing-room, you know-against the usages

of polite society; one has to 'mix,'—that's her word,—talk meaningless ape-chatter with the entire cageful." He paused for another pull at his cigar. Q. Q. made no comment. He was listening, all his faculties concentrated. Sir Humphrey resumed.

Anyway, they managed to give me an invitation to visit them at their flat in Mount Street. I went-the next day. And I got quite a lot of information-highly secret information which-as it happened to be already in our possession-I could check. They hated the Bolshy régime thoroughly, father and daughter alikeand no wonder, if their story was even half true. A story of torture, robbery and murder of pretty near their entire family that would have been a gold-nugget to a Riga special-correspondent. I went several times, and each time I got something more-with a hint of something really big if-and they made this proviso-I were really going out to India again. Finally, I put my cards on the table, told them I was. And then the rabbit came out of

"It seems the lady has a cousin-real name Baron Raschevsky, but known to the Communists as Stapouloff. To save his skin, he took service under the Soviet government, won their confidence, and is now second-in-command under Tretiakeff in India, at the very center of all their underground intrigues. If they are to be believed, Mr. Stapouloff is consumed by an undying secret hatred of his employers and is only waiting for a chance to play them a thoroughly dirty trick-to blow the entire Soviet organization in India sky-high, in fact. The long and the short of it was that they promised to put me into touch with this very interesting gentleman.

Once more Sir Humphrey paused for a puff or two at his cigar. "Of course, that isn't the kind of information that can be ignored," he went on. "I thought the best thing to do was to go and tell Loftus about it—it's down his street, as you know. I did so—and he was quite considerably interested. Naturally, he was very curious to meet my Russian friends. He asked me to invite them to dinner-and not to mention that he would be present. I don't know, unfortunately, what reasons he had for that. He didn't tell me at the time, and now-" Sir Humphrey broke off with a jerk.

"And last night was the dinner?" said Q. Q.

"Yes. We had a very pleasant evening. Of course, I had said nothing about Loftus coming along. He turned up about five minutes after they did, and he was the best of company-really brilliant-you know what he could be when he was in the mood. They all got on splendidly together.'

"No sign of recognition on either side?"

SIR HUMPHREY shook his head.

"No. Not the least. Of course, I didn't get a chance to talk to Loftus.

"And then what happened?"

"At a little after eleven, the Russians went away. I accompanied them downstairs, saw them into a taxi. I went up again to my rooms, where Loftus was sitting waiting for me-and then -that's the confoundedly queer part about it, Quayne—I can't really remember quite what happened."

"Tell me what the part of yourself that remembers or seems

to remember most has to say.

"I've got a sort of knowledge-a conviction, rather than a memory-of having gone straight to the drawer of my desk where I keep a revolver, taken out the weapon, and deliberately shot Loftus-without any reason whatever-as he sat there in the chair. And then I can't remember anything at all, until I woke up this morning, found myself lying on the carpet, and saw Jimmy sitting there dead in the chair, with the revolver on the floor between us.

"And the other part of you-what does that remember?"

"Nothing at all. It's a blank from the time I saw those people disappearing down the street in their taxi-until the moment I woke up this morning. "H'm!" Q. Q. sat w

Q. Q. sat with closely pressed lips. "What are your

domestic arrangements, Maule?"
"It's a service flat. The management sent up the dinner from the restaurant, and did the waiting. Cleared up after we had finished, while we were in the sitting-room. They do all the finished, while we were in the sitting-room. They do all the work of the place, you know—except my sitting-room. I don't like unknown people messing about with my papers. My man does that."

"He doesn't sleep on the premises, you said. Was he there

last night?

"I let him off before ten o'clock-when he had brought in the whisky decanter and a couple of siphons. As I told you, I sent

him off for the day directly he arrived at seven-thirty this morning. My sitting-room is just as it was last night, with poor Jimmy sitting in that chair-behind a locked door.

QUAYNE leaned back and pondered for a moment.

"You say you saw your guests depart in their taxi. How did you get back into your rooms? Did you let yourself in with a key-or did you leave the door open?

Sir Humphrey stared at him for a moment.

"I went up in the lift—by Jove, yes, it comes back to me now—I found my door shut, and when I felt for my bunch of keys I found I must have left them inside—I had to ring the

"Who opened the door?"

"Jimmy, of course—yes, I remember that—besides, there was no one else in the flat.

Was he quite normal?"

"Well, we'd had a good dinner-and one or two whiskies and sodas afterward-and, yes, I was a bit cheerful, I suppose. remember now, thinking that Jimmy was rather unsteady on his pins—absurd, of course, last fellow in the world to take too much—shows I must have been rather merrier than I thought drunken man always thinks everyone else is squiffy.

And now can you remember anything else at all after Loftus let you into your rooms-apart from your conviction that then

or subsequently you shot him?'

Sir Humphrey puckered his brows in a concentration of mem-

ory, shook his head.

'Nothing at all—other than that, it is a blank. . say, Quayne!" A sudden excitement came into his voice. a funny thing about those keys! I could swear I hadn't got them in my pocket when I rang at that door-I remember ringing and ringing—Jimmy was slow in tumbling to what had happened, yet I certainly had them in my trouser-pocket when I woke up this morning. I remember turning them out quite normally with all my other things when I changed out of my dress kit. they are." He fished out a bunch of keys from his pocket, held them up. "It's an action so automatic to shift them from one kit to another that I hadn't given them a thought. But I certainly didn't have them last night-unless I was far more drunk than I thought.

"That, of course, is a possibility," said Q. Q. quietly. like to know a little more about these guests of yours. Can you

describe the lady?"

"Tall, slim, raven-black hair, wonderful large gray eyes-beau-

tiful as a goddess—gives you a thrill to look at her. "H'm!" commented Q. Q. grimly. "Enthusiasm

"Enthusiasm is not decommented Q. Q. grimly. scription. You were more definitely helpful about her father. Wait a moment." He got up, went across to a large cabinet index-file on the farther wall of the room, returned with a couple of large envelopes. He sat down again, opened the dossiers, took out three or four photographs from each, spread them on his desk. "Are these your friends, Maule?"

Sir Humphrey leaned forward, looked at the photographs, ut-

tered a sharp exclamation.

"By Jove, yes! Both of them!"

Q. Q. smiled in quiet satisfaction. "I thought I was right," he said. "But I am surprised that Loftus didn't tell you anything about those people when you rejoined him. He had quite a special interest in them both-and he certainly recognized them. The father's real name—he has of course many aliases—is Dr. Hugo Weidmann. He was at one time a well-known psycho-analyst in Vienna. Then he got into an unpleasant scandal, cleared out of Austria, and went into the German secret service, a line of business in which his professional experience was extremely useful. Over here, during the war, he posed as a Russian reformer who had fled from the Czarist police prior to 1914—and he brought off one or two really big coups before our people got on his track and he vanished into thin air.

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Sir Humphrey. "You're making me

feel an awful fool, Quayne!"
"The daughter's name," continued Q. Q. imperturbably, "is Clara Weidmann—originally, that is to say; the names she has since given herself would fill a page of 'Who's Who.' She was certainly one of the most efficient spies we ever had to deal with. And she got clear away—but not before she had murdered, in very mysterious circumstances, one of Loftus' best men. Jimmy swore he would get her sooner or later-that was why, evidently. half-recognizing both from your description, he asked you to arrange a little diner intime so that he could put the matter beyond doubt. You, of course, serving in India all your life, would know



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nothing of either of them." He leaned back in his chair, finger-tips together. "I'm be-ginning to see a little daylight in this, Maule." "I'm damned if I am," replied Sir Humphrey. "With all that! Who are

these people working for now?" They knew or guessed that you might be going back to India. You're a formidable adversary, Maule—on your own ground. They did the clever thing—nobbled you from the start. If you had taken all their information seriously,-naturally they saw to it that all you could check should be genuine,-and had put yourself in the hands of Mr. Stapouloff, you'd have got yourself into a pretty mess."

"Well, that's out of the question now,

I don't go to India-I go to anyway. nasty little ceremony in a prison-yard early some morning. For there's no doubt about it-mad or not-I shot poor Loftus."

Q. Q. looked at him.

"Doesn't it occur to you, Maule, how extremely convenient it is to these two peoextremely convenient it is to these two purple that Loftus—they certainly recognized him as he recognized them—should be dead, and you completely out of the way?"

"Yes—but—" Sir Humphrey frowned in a desperation of thought. "It can't be

more than a coincidence. I saw them go-I'm certain of that. How could they have back, killed Loftus-and-this is the vital point—given me the conviction that I had done it myself? How could they?"
"That, Maule," said Q. Q., caressing his chin, "we're going to try and find out."

Sir Humphrey leaned forward in a sud-

den hypothesis.

"They couldn't have drugged me—made me murder Jimmy, could they?" he asked desperately. "It wouldn't go down with a jury, I know, but it means a lot to me. isn't possible-just widely possible-is it? Queer things happen in India, you know.

Q. Q. shrugged his shoulders.
"They are very clever people," he said, as he took a sheet of notepaper and commenced to write. He wrote only a few quick words, folded the paper, reached for an envelope, rut in the note, stuck it down and addressed it. "What number in Mount Street?" Sir Humphrey told him. He added it, looked across to me. "A little job for you, Mr. Creighton. Take this note to the Countess Stravinsky and give it to her personally." He glanced at his watch. "It is now just eleven o'clock. You will probably find her at home. She may have something to say to you. Stay and listen to it—stay just as long as she likes to keep you—make the lady's acquaintance, in fact." He smiled at me. "But when you do leave, rejoin us at Sir Humbers's course. Cive him the Sir Humphrey's rooms. —Give him the address, Maule."

SIR HUMPHREY gave me his card, and a few minutes later, with Q. Q.'s letter in my pocket, I was in a taxi speeding toward Mount Street.

I will confess that a twinge of trepidation mingled with my instinctive little thrill of suppressed excitement as I pressed the doorbell at Count Murovieff's flat. Into what hornet's nest was I blindly venturing? On the face of it, a more dangerous couple d'd not perhaps exist in London than the people behind this still closed door. How would I be received? What was in that note I was to deliver—Q. Q. had reiterated his orders, been emphatic—only into the Countess Stravinsky's own hand? I had not the least idea, and at that moment I would have given all my month's salary for glimpse at its contents. I remembered suddenly, with more than annoyance, that I had left my automatic in my desk. I was

defenseless if- The door opened. A prim, foreign-looking maid stood in the entrance. I stated my business, declined-in obedience to O. O.'s instructions-to name

the person from whom I came, insisted merely that I had an important note to deliver to the Countess Stravinsky herself. The maid was evidently used to mysterious emissaries. She gave me a searching glance, which summed me up from the soles of my feet to the hat on my head, and threw the door wide open.
"Come zis vay," she said.

She led me into a large drawing-room,

furnished with an exotic and bizarre luxury, a room of rich Chinese blues touched with vivid greens, where gilt Buddhas and grotesque Hindu gods niched themselves against

a simplicity of wall.
"Vait 'ere," said the maid. "I vill tell
ze Countess."

I stood there, feeling my heart thump, and waited. And I craved for my auto-matic, so thoughtlessly left behind. The atmosphere of that room seemed pregnant with something mysteriously sinister. What drama was going to be precipitated by that sealed thin note I fingered? I visualized myself trapped, murderously assailed. They would stick at nothing, these people. I found myself looking at a memory of the Chief's confident, quiet smile, listening to an inward echo of his parting words: 'Don't hurry echo of his parting words: 'Don't hurry away, Mr. Creighton. Stay as long as the lady wishes to keep you.' There was a subtle significance in those words I could not fathom. It exasperated me. What was expected of me? What did he want me to do? I racked my brains for divination of it-mentally cursed him for not being more explicit.

I turned from an absent-minded stare at a squat white-jade Chinese idol poised upon an ultramodern cabinet in polished vivid green wood, to see the Counters standing in the room, the door-curtain just falling be-

hind her.

And I turned with a jerk-a stammering My wits deserted me. I think confusion. I gasped. For the woman who stood there tall, slim, garbed in an exquisitely simple gown of black, a drooping necklace of large pearls for her only adornment-was in bewildering contradiction to my apprehensive imagination of imminent and savage vio-lence. She was beautiful—beautiful, I can only reiterate the word-with such a purity of beauty, such a grave perfection of Ma-donnalike loveliness, that her presence set me quivering in a surge of awe that overwhelmed the cynicism of reason. Her large clear gray eyes-wonderful under the ravenblack hair smoothed with the slightest ripple back from her brows-rested upon me in mute inquiry. I managed to get my tongue to speak, to achieve coherence.

"The Countess Stravinsky?" I said. She made the faintest affirmative move-ment of her head. "Yes." Her voice, in the utterance of

Her voice, in the utterance of that one syllable, was surprisingly musical on a rich, deep, vibrant note.

I held out the envelope.

She took it, tore it open, read the missive. I saw a sudden hardness come into her beautiful face. Once more, the wonderful gray eyes were resting on me.

"You know what is in this note?" "No, madame."

The hardness vanished from her face-

vanished so that a moment later one could not recall what it had been. She smileda sudden opening of dazzling fascination.
"You are an,"—she hesitated,—"an er

are an,"—she hesitated,—"an em-of Mr. Quentin Quayne?" I had no cue for my answer. I risked

the truth. "Yes, madame."

Her eyes ranged over me, summed me up. You seem to be a gentleman," she said. I bowed.

"Were you told to bring back an answer this?" She indicated the sheet of paper She indicated the sheet of paper in her hand.

"I was told merely to hand it to you

personally, madame." Confound Q. Q.! Why the devil hadn't he told me what was Confound Q. Q.! in that letter? I should have had at least some idea of what to do or say.

The large gray eyes rested on me again. She pondered something I could not guess at. Then again she smiled.

at. Then again she smiled.

"Will you not sit down, Mr—Mr—
She finished on a note of interrogation.

"Creighton," I said.

I TOOK a seat on the divan to which she gestured. She sat down also, and the thick cushions sank into a nest under the pressure of her slim tall form in its clinging black gown. Our eyes met. A part of me reminded me insistently that she was a spy, a murderess. Another part of me, deep down, elemental, blindly instinctive, rose in revolt against an accusation that seemed patently absurd. The incongruity was too gross. Could so exquisite a beauty of face and figure harbor the soul whose Q's dosindictment was contained in Q. Q.'s dos-sier? Awed in the spell of that beauty. awed by something subtly, indefinably yet more potent in that silence, I contemplated those Madonnalike features, felt again the eart thumping in my breast. Q. Humphrey-both might have been mistaken. Photographs are the most deceptive of evidence. These thoughts flashed through me in a matter of seconds. She was pondering again-pondering perhaps what was required of her. What was required of her? the devil was in that note?

Suddenly she smiled once more, stretched out her slim white arm to a cigarette-box on a little table, held it out to me.

"Will you smoke, Mr. Creighton?" she asked in that rich, deep, indefinably thrilling voice.

I accepted. She took one herself, reached for the matches, struck a light, held it to my cigarette-her large gray eyes close to mine evoked a peculiar intimate start deep down in me, a sudden surge and tumult of blood, over which I set my teeth-lit her own. She dropped the still lighted match into an antique bronze tripod brazier— Chinese and grotesque—which stood close to my right hand.

You are going straight back to Mr.

Quayne when you leave here?"
"Yes, madame." It was impossible for me not to answer her in tones of instinctive

She was silent again, contemplative of her cigarette, and then of me. Q. Q. have asked of her? "You are not in a hurry?" What could

"No, madame."

A quick look came from those clear gray large under the raven-black hair, a look that shot through me like a search-It was instantly veiled, replaced by a smile that was languorously serene. She smiled, it seemed, at pleasant thoughts of her own.

I sat, my heart thumping, waiting for her next words. I heard the faint ticking of a clock across the room. And as I waited, I became gradually conscious of a subtle incenselike perfume filling the atmosphere, a diffusion of cloying aromatic sweetness semipungent to my nostrils, that made me automatically take a deep breath. It filled my lungs, seemed to mount to my head. I pulled myself out of a momentary dizziness. glanced round at the brazier into which she had thrown her match. A slender stem of gray smoke ascended from the bowl, coiled into a lazy spiral at its summit. Was this some sinister trick? No-impossible-fantastic! My suspicions were running away with me. At the same time, I disliked that slowly curling incense—disliked it with a tingling as of little alarm-bells all over me, with an almost overmastering impulse to spring up, escape from its cloying suffoca-tion. Yet I dared not—dumb in the awe

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Every night before retiring apply hot cloths to your face until the skin is reddened. Then with a rough wash-cloth work up a heavy lather of Woodbury's Facial Soap and rub it into the pores thoroughly, always with an upward and outward motion. Rinse with clear hot water, then with cold. If possible, rub your face for thirty seconds with a piece of ice.

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Once or twice a week, just before retiring, fill your basin full of hot water—almost boiling hot. Bend over the top of the basin and cover your head and the bowl with a heavy bath towel, so that no steam can escape. Steam your face for thirty seconds. Now lather a hot cloth with Woodbury's Facial Soap. With this wash your face thoroughly, rubbing the lather well into the skin with an upward and outward motion. Then rinse the skin well, first with warm water, then with cold, and finish by rubbing it for thirty seconds with a piece of ice.

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she inspired in me-break her silence. She remained immobile, lost in thoughts, her

face a miracle of calm beauty.

I resigned myself. That slender stem of gray smoke continued to ascend, to flatten at its summit into long, lazily spreading wreaths. I breathed deeply in the thickened atmosphere of the room, deeply and yet more deeply. My environment seemed to have gone vaguely misty. And with that subtly pervasive aromatic odor I inhaled at every breath, a numbness in myself—imperceptible at first-crept over me. My brain dulled. I relaxed, luxuriously, languorously, carelessly scornful of the vigilant alertness to which a moment before I had endeavored to hold fast. I lost the clear sense of my identity, forgot why I was sitting in that chair, staring at that beautiful woman, silent and now half-recumbent, upon the settee. And in place of my normal self, obscure impulses stirred in me, suddenly released from origins I had never suspected in myself, disturbing me with their unfamiliar force, with their urge to a fantastic recklessness. They frightened me. It was like a demoniac possession where I was losing control. I found myself yearning for a mad kiss from that exquisite mouth. My arms ached to enfold that lithe, slender figure, to crush it frenziedly in an embrace that would enforce reciprocation. My brain whirled at the thought of it-it seemed that the next moment I should spring forward, hot-breathed upon her-flung from my seat by an impulse beyond civilized volition.

Yet I did not move. I felt something hurt the fingers of my right hand on my knee. It was my cigarette, forgotten, which had burned down to them. With an immense muscular effort, I tossed the stump into the brazier whence the gray smoke ascended. In that last flicker of normal consciousness, I glanced at the watch upon my wrist. To my surprise, it marked only half-past eleven.

THE silence had lasted a time beyond my computation. She turned her large clear eyes upon me, smiled. I perceived her with a vision that was blurred, heard herdeep-toned, thrillingly sonorous-with a dizzy brain.

"You are thinking things about me-unpleasant things?"

"Madame-I-I-My own

sounded strange to me.

She leaned forward, exquisitely seductive. Again I felt that primitive reckless urge, almost irresistible, electric, spontaneous, in every fiber of me, repressed it with a last spasm of will.

'I want you to look in my eyes-and see if you can believe them."

The eyes came close, wide open, eyes of a strange clear gray, the pupils peculiarly fascinating, seeking mine.

"Madame-I-I-" That direct gaze was insupportable. I dropped my own-gasped in a suffocation, my brain in a dizzy whirl.

"Look! Keep on looking!" I obeyed-obeyed because I had no will left, because obedience was the easiest, the

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only possible thing-authority emanated from her, mysteriously potent, not to be chal-lenged. I looked into those eyes that focused themselves on mine-looked-kept on looking-saw nothing but those eyes-looked into them for an endless time where I lost perception of all else but those two clear eyes holding mine until I could no longer turn away my gaze. My arm jerked of itself—went stiff. An immense fatigue weighed heavy on my shoulders.

"Lean back!"

A last flicker of resistance leaped up in

e. "No-no! I mustn't-"
"Lean back!" I ceded, relaxed, felt sud-

denly comfortable.

It might have been æons afterward that I saw, mistily, as through my eyelashes, the Countess standing tall above me. She smiled and nodded. But she smiled to a sharp-faced, white-haired, intellectual-looking

little man, eagerly anxious by her side.
"Yes—I think so." Her voice came through—through cotton-wool—to my dulled senses. I could not move—had no will to move. I leaned back locked in a complete passivity I accepted with a last tiny fragment of my consciousness.

"Answer me, Mr. Creighton."
"Yes." I heard myself answer—a voice that was far away from me—a voice that spoke with surprising (only I had lost the capacity for surprise) promptness of obedi-

And then-and then-I remember nothing more, until-I cannot say to this day, how -I found myself in a taxi, speeding through the London traffic, and knowing quite clearly that I was on my way to Q. Q. at Sir Humphrey Maule's rooms. What had happened in that flat? How did I get into that taxi? I could not remember. only remember, very clearly, that I was on my way to Q. Q.—that I must get to Q. Q. for a reason still obscure to me—with the minimum of delay. I felt like a man just awakened from intoxication. What I had done or said was lost to me. I glanced at my watch. It marked just twelve o'clock. What had happened to me in that last halfhour? It was an absolute blank. And then another alarm shot into my mind. Was I really going to Sir Humphrey's flat-or was the taxi-driver taking me, under sinister or-ders, to some other destination? I had not the least recollection of giving him the address. . . I had scarce grappled with this sudden panic when the cab stopped, in the quiet street off St. James where Sir Humlived, at the number given on the card I took, for verification, from my pocket. I got out.

"Who gave you this address?" I asked, as I paid my fare.

The taxi-driver stared at me. "You did, sir," he said.

I HURRIED into the building, cursing at the exhibition I had made of myself. The lift shot me up to the floor occupied by Sir Humphrey. I rang. Sir Humphrey himself opened the door.

I followed him along a short passage, into an unfamiliar sitting-room adorned with Indian trophies. A white sheet was thrown over something shapeless in a chair near the table. In another chair, near a writing-desk, Q. Q. was sitting. He smiled at me

I stopped. What was it I had to do when I saw Q. Q.? What was the obscure impulse which surged up in me, which made my fingers work nervously of themselves? A cloud was over my brain. I felt my muscles go spontaneously rigid. O. O. still

"A knife, Mr. Creighton?" he said blandly held out an ivory paper-knife.

I took it automatically, felt my fingers clench tightly over it without my volition—and then, as though a trigger were pulled inside me that discharged a sudden nervous

force, with no clear consciousness of what I was doing, but under an impulse that filled me suddenly to the exclusion of all else, I sprang at him, stabbed straight at his chest with the paper-knife. And even as I delivered the blow, I had an obscure halfknowledge that it was all right, that it was only harmless make-believe-a complaisance that reconciled conflicting compulsions.

Sir Humphrey leaped forward with a

startled cry, clutched my wrist.
Q. Q. smiled. He had sat motionless,

Q. Q. smired.
without a tremor.
him go. The wrong knife, Mr. Maule

Sir Humphrey hesitated.

"Give it to him."

HE obeyed the authoritative command in that quiet voice. With obvious reluctance he handed me an Indian dagger in place of the paper-knife he had wrenched from my grasp. I stood quivering, in a peculiar suspension of thought, of all volition. It was as though I was under a spell. I accepted the dagger, felt my fingers close over its hilt.

"Obey the command given you, Mr. Creighton," said Q. Q. quietly.

At the words, once more I sprang-and as I did so, I realized with an overwhelming shock what it was I had in my hand. what it was I had been commanded to do

-murder-murder Q. Q.! That realization

checked me like a bullet striking me in midcourse. In an immense revulsion of all myself, a violent spontaneous shattering recoil from the atrocity I was about to commit, I stopped dead, flung the dagger from My brain suddenly cleared. I stood trembling, dazed, bewildered, ready to drop with humiliation. I could have burst into hysterical tears.

"My God, sir!" I stammered. "Whatwhat's the matter with me? Am I mad? Or-or-" I had no explanation to offer. Or-or-" even to myself. The lack of it terrified me. looked at that dagger lying on the floor, and felt suddenly physically sick. I swayed

on my feet.

Q. Q. rose quietly from his chair, put his

hand on my shoulder.

"All right, Mr. Creighton." His eyes looked into mine, sent reassurance into me. braced me to command of myself. "You've been making yourself useful for once—that's all." He smiled. "Sit down in that chair He smiled. "Sit down in that chair and pull yourself together." Once more his eyes looked straight, compellingly, into mine., "You are quite normal again—quite—you understand that?"

Yes sir," I gasped, and subsided weakly

into the chair.

He turned to Sir Humphrey. "Well, Maule, do you see the point of that little experiment?"

'I'm damned if I do!" Sir Humphrey was emphatic.

Then I'll tell you. I sent Mr. Creighton round to your lady-friend of last nightshe's the more dangerous of the pair-with a note he was instructed to deliver only into the Countess Stravinsky's own hand. no doubt he did so. That note was as follows." Q. Q. smiled grimly as he paused. "On behalf of Mr. James Loftus, Mr. Quentin Quayne presents his compliments to Fräulein Clara Weidmann." Rather a shock to the lady, I'm afraid." He smiled again. "Now do you begin to see?"

"Not in the least."

Q. Q. turned to me.
"What happened in the flat at Mount
Street, Mr. Creighton?"

I tried with all my might to remember—found myself baffled with an absolute blank-It exasperated me, humiliated me ness.

"I-I'm sorry, sir," I stammered. "I don't know what's the matter with me-I can't remember anything about it."



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QUAYNE nodded. His voice was kindly as he spoke

as he spoke. Never mind. I can guess." He turned again to Sir Humphrey. "Put yourself in the lady's place. Last night she meets Jimmy Loftus, realizes that she is recognized and eliminates him very cleverly. morning she learns not only that Quentin Quayne is aware of her identity, but that Quentin Quayne holds her responsible for Loftus' death. Obviously, Quentin Quayne also must be eliminated at once. How is she to do it? One method, at least, par-ticularly after last night, would instantly suggest itself to her-a temptation I dangled in front of her, in fact. You will remember that I carefully told Mr. Creighton not to hurry away. I put an opportunity into her hands."

"Opportunity?" queried Sir Humphrey,

still puzzled.

"Hypnosis," said Q. Q. succinctly. "You forget her father was professor of psychiatry in Vienna-and she was an apt pupil. She undoubtedly hypnotized Creighton, and gave him the post-hypnotic suggestion, with the safeguard that his memory should be an absolute blank on the matter, that he should stab me directly he saw me. I noticed his fingers working the moment he came into the room. You saw for yourself what happened."

"Good God!" groaned Sir Humphrey in a sudden anguish. "And they must have hypnotized me also! Made me kill poor Jimmy! I really did it, then! That proves

"It proves nothing of the sort. It proves just the opposite. One of my reasons for making this somewhat dangerous experiment was to establish beyond doubt whether it is or is not possible to hypnotize a subject into committing a genuine murder. It is easy enough to make him act a dummy one-but it is a hotly disputed point whether he will or will not obey a suggestion to do the real thing. Your lady-friend was doubtless quite aware of this-but the case was urgent with her; she had to take a long chance if she was to do anything at all. "She took it—after all, the possibility

has never been definitely disproved. And I took a chance that, being quite ready for him, I might be quicker than Mr. Creighton if he meant business with a real knife in his hand. You saw the difference in his behavior when he had the paper-knife and when he had the real thing. No, Maule," he concluded decisively, "my experiment proved beyond doubt that whatever hypnotic suggestion was given you last night,your drinks were drugged, of course,did not murder Jimmy Loftus. If the thing can be done at all, it could be done with Creighton. She tried. It can not be done."

Sir Humphrey mopped his brow. "You're sure?" "Quite sure!"

The big man stared at him. "Thank God!" he ejaculated. "But how do you account for my instinctive conviction that I did do it?"

Q. Q. smiled.

"It is quite easy under hypnosis to make a man wake up with the belief that he has committed a murder-especially if you arrange the circumstantial evidence convincingly. . . . May I use your telephone?"
"Yes-yes-of course." Sir Humphr

Sir Humphrey

"The Fired Man"

He is a character in one of the funniest stories you've ever read-a story of a girl in vaudeville, by an author who knows vaudeville inside and out-Walter De Leon. It will appear in an early issue.

was still bewildered. "What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to get your friends round here. Very clever people!" Q. Q. smiled again as he picked up the telephone. "But I think they'll find this is a case of diamond cut dia-mond." He gave a number, waited. "Hallo! Is that Sebright? Oh, Sebright, a murder was committed last night at Sir Humphrey Maule's flat-yes, St. I'll give you the details presently. Yes—I want you to come round but on your way, I want you to call at 504 Mount Street and bring along a couple of Russian people, Count Murovieff and his daughter the Countess Stravinsky. Listenand I'll explain. These two people were guests of Sir Humphrey Maule last night. They left soon after eleven. The murder was committed after that hour. cisely. . . . They have an alibi. Now, I want you to explain to them that their presence is necessary to verify whether the room is or is not as they left it at eleven. You can tell them, if you like, that the murderer is known. I think you'll have no difficulty in persuading them to come along; they cannot refuse their assistance in eluci dating the circumstances of the crime. But it is most important that they should accompany you—and by the way, don't mention my name. Good! You'll find me in iny name. Good! You'll find me in Sir Humphrey's flat expecting you."

He hung up the receiver, turned to us with a smile. "Now, we'll soon clear up all this little business."

SIR HUMPHREY had been pacing up and down the room. He swung round to Q. Q.

"I'm still bewildered, Quayne. really happened in this room last night?"

Q. Q. smiled at him.

You've heard of dhatura, Maule?" "Of course I have. Favorite drug of the Indian criminal. Seeds rather like capsicum. Usually administered chopped up. no trace in the human body. Ser Leaves

Sends the victim into insensibility, and if he doesn't die, he wakes up minus his memory—can't

remember a thing about it.'

"Precisely. Your two Russian friends are, however, a little more refined in their methods than the ordinary Indian criminal. They didn't want the police to find you and Loftus lying dead here, and they themselves naturally under suspicion. wanted Loftus dead and you self-accused of the murder. So they put into your whiskies and sodas a little-not crude dhatura, but a preparation of the drug which is considerably more subtle in its effect; it leaves the victim extremely susceptible to hypnotic influence at the same time that it embroils his memory and paralyzes him into a semi-insensible immobility. A drop or two would suffice, and it would take about ten minutes to have its effect. They did this just before they left. You accompanied them downstairs. On the way, they picked your pocket of your keys. You came back, found the door shut, and-you rememberit was some little time before you could get Loftus to open it. The drug was already working in him, of course. You thought working in him, of course. You thought that both he and you had had a little too much to drink. You both went back into the sitting-room-not very steadily, I expect—and sat down. You were both sitting there, quite helpless, when at a time convenient to your departed friends—perhaps two hours later, when everybody in the place had gone to bed—they returned, let themselves in at the outer door and then this door with your keys, and found you nicely ready for them." "Good God!" exclaimed Sir Humphrey.

"And then-

"And then they hunted for your revolver, found it, shot Loftus as he sat paralyzed in his chair, put the revolver on the floor after smearing your finger with the burnt powder which had escaped from its not very closely fitting barrel, put the keys back in your pocket, and gave you a detailed hypnotic suggestion that you had done the whole business yourself, that you would sleep till the morning, and wake up with such a full conviction of your guilt that you would surrender yourself to the police. Very neat, I think

"Phew!" Sir Humphrey whistled. He was still only half-convinced, however, and showed it. "All this is damned difficult to prove in a court of law, Quayne. What do you propose to do when you get those peo-

ple here?

Q. Q. smiled again. "I told you this was a case of diamond cut diamond. You'll see. They should be here in a minute or two now.

WE sat and waited, we three-and that sheeted something in the armchair, which, in my state of broken nerve, I was grateful not to see uncovered. The minutes dragged. The ringing of the doorbell-when it came—was almost a relief. "You go, Maule," said Q. Q.

Sir Humphrey went to open to the new arrivals. Q. Q. turned to the chair by the table, carefully withdrew that shapelessly humped covering, revealed a once goodlooking man crumpled in the seat, his head forward upon his chest, dried blood plastered on his face from a wound in the temple. I gripped myself in a sudden sickening, sat short-breathed in suspense.

The next moment Sir Humphrey was

again at the door, speaking to those who followed him.

"In here," he said. He made way politely for the lady.

She entered. I can't describe what sprang up in me at the sight once more of that quiet Madonnalike beauty. It was a wild, craven panic of all my deepest being. I gasped lest those great eyes, pregnant still with mysterious potency under the little clocke hat she wore, should turn my way. Behind her was the little intellectual-faced man. And behind him was Sebright.

She took a step or two into the room, saw the corpse in the chair, and then her eyes switched to Q. Q. standing impassively close to it-from Q. Q. to me, fascinated where I sat. She must have recognized him, as she recognized me-recognized also, in a flash, that her plan had failed. Q. Q. was still alive-grimly smiling. She swayed, went deathly pale.

The little old man sprang forward, caught her in his arms.
"Poor lady! Too much of a shock to

her seeing that in the chair, Quayne," said Sebright with reproof in his voice.

But Q. Q. ignored him. He also had sprung forward, caught at the lady, seemed to be mixed up in almost a struggle with the little man as he took her into his own stronger arms.
"All right," he said. "Let me have her.

She'll be all right in a minute. Brandy,

He deposited her carefully in an armchair, turned to take the brandy-decanter Sir Humphrey held out to him.

"A glass?" Q. Q.'s eyes ranged round the room. "Ah, there's one!" He went across to a side-table, poured out a stiff peg of brandy, took it back to the woman. waved it away. "I insist!" he said, firmly but not unkindly, held it to her mouth, poured some, whether she willed or no, down her throat. She gasped and choked with it.

Sir Humphrey was explaining to Sebright what he knew of the crime.

"I woke up at seven o'clock this morning in this room to-to see that!" he said, gesturing to the corpse in the chair. "But who

"Loftus!" exclaimed Sebright. could have done it?"



"After 25 years, I know!"



Real Naptha! You can tell by the smell

Do you board or live in apartments? You will value Fels-Naptha all the more. The little in-between washes of hand kerchiefs, stockings and underthings can be safely, quickly and thoroughly done with Fels-Naptha, even with cool or luke-warm water.

What temperature for wash water?

Use water of any temperature with Fels-Naptha. Boil clothes with Fels-Naptha if you wish. You are bound to get good results. The real naptha in Fels-Naptha makes the dirt let go. no matter whether the water is cool, lukewarm or hot.



The original and genuine naptha soap comes in the familiar red-and-green wrapper. Buy it in the convenient ten-bar carton.

"Now that you are married, dear, your job will be to run the house just as well as John hopes to run his business. At first you'll have to do most of the work yourself—even the washing and cleaning."

"But don't let that worry you. It isn't work, my dear, that takes the bloom from pretty cheeks. It's the work women do needlessly—the downright drudgeries.

"I want you to avoid the drudgeries. I don't want you to waste one precious minute of glorious youth on them. And that's why I'm giving you this Fels-Naptha.

"Over twenty-five years ago—when your mother was a bride—Fels-Naptha had just come out. They had found a way to combine naptha and good soap so that these two splendid cleaners could work together—help each other. It proved quite a sensation.

"Your mother and I both tried it. We found that Fels-Naptha not only made washday easier, but it made our clothes cleaner and gave them that sweet clean clothes smell. We also found it splendid for dishes, floors, woodwork and for other odd cleaning jobs about the house.

"You'll be tempted many times to buy some of the new-fangled cleaners that are advertised to do everything but the ironing.

"You will be offered soaps at 'bargain' prices, or tempted by specials of some brand or another.

"I know, because I've gone through it myself. And I tried about everything —many soaps and washing powders you never even hear about now.

"My advice to you is—stick to Fels-Naptha. After 25 years, I haven't found a thing that can take its place. Your mother, I dare say, will tell you the same.

"After all, my dear, the only reason you use soap, is for the washing and cleaning help it gives you. The sensible thing then, is to buy a soap that gives you the greatest amount of help, isn't it?

"Neither your mother nor I feel we could afford to be without the *extra* helpfulness of Fels-Naptha.

"Fel's-Naptha is so gentle to clothes, too. And remember this—clothes needlessly worn out in the wash by using harsh cleaners or by hard rubbing, cost hundreds of times more than any soap you can buy.

"It will pay you in so many ways to stick to Fels-Naptha for nothing can take its place."

PROVE for yourself the extra goodness of Fels-Naptha. Get a bar from your grocer'sor send 2c in stamps for sample bar. Address Fels-Naptha Soap, Philadelphia.

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jumped with the surprise of it. It was Sir Humphrey who had spoken—automati-cally—with full conviction.

Sebright also had jumped.
"You?" he cried. "You, Sir Humphrey?" Sir Humphrey stood confused.

"I—I really don't know why I said that!" he stammered. "It—it was like something saying it for me."

Sebright gave him a glance of deep sus-picion. Q. Q. interposed.

"All right, Sebright. He didn't mean it.
He didn't do it. You'll understand pres-Sebright looked altogether unconvinced. He turned to the little white-haired man.

'You left Sir Humphrey alone with Mr. Loftus last night, I understand, Count?" he said, professionally sharp-voiced.

"Yes. At five minutes past eleven. Sir Humphrey accompanied us to the street, put us into a taxi. Is not that so, Sir Hum-phrey?" The little old man was suave, pleasantly soft in his tones, a little nervous, however, for he took a white silk handkerchief from his pocket, wiped his mouth in a finically dandified gesture.
"Yes," said Sir Humphrey. I saw the

sweat pearling on his forehead. "Yes-that's quite right."

"No one else was in the flat apparently," continued Sebright, severely. "Your position requires a considerable amount of explanation, Sir Humphrey."

Sir Humphrey stammered.
"I—I—" He looked helplessly toward

At that moment I uttered a startled cry. A peculiar expression had come over the face of the beautiful woman in the chair. The vivid personality had gone out of it. She leaned back limply, stared in front of her with eyes that one guessed saw nothing seemed as if in a trance.

THE little white-haired old man jumped forward again. Q. Q. restrained him. "All right, Count. Please do not interfere.

This is a most fortunate little accident, I think." He smiled pleasantly as he quietly pushed the little old man back. "I had an intuition from the moment I saw your daughter that she was clairvoyant. As you see, she has gone into a trance—quite harmless— overcome perhaps by the sinister influences with which this room must still be soaked. Let us avail ourselves of it—in the interests of justice." He smiled again. "Your daughter will perhaps be able to show us pre-cisely what happened in this room last night."

A frightened look had come into the little

old man's eyes

"I-I protest!" he said sharply, making an effort to assert a personal dignity. "I protest against your trying possibly dangerous and certainly quite illegal experiments with my daughter!"

Q. Q. smiled at him.

"I am afraid, with all due apology, that I must ignore your protests, Count. A murder was committed in this room last night by very clever and quite unscrupulous peo-We cannot afford a too scrupulous legality in dealing with them. A case of diamond cut diamond, in fact." He smiled again, turned to Sebright. His manner suddenly changed. "Will you please see that this man does not interfere, Sebright? I give him formally into your charge as Dr. Hugo Weidmann, against whom there is a warrant as accessory to the murder of Henry Paulin, Mr. Loftus' chief assistant, in January 1917."

"It's false!" screamed the little man.
"It is true," replied Q. Q. imperturbably.
"Quick, Scbright! Hold him—before he tries any tricks! And gag him if he begins to utter a word!"

Sebright, after one quick stare of amaze-

ment, leaped to the emergency. In a mo-ment he was by the side of the man, held him fast.

"And now," continued Q. Q., with a grimly bland smile, "we will proceed with the ex-periment." He turned to Sir Humphrey. "Pull up the chair from which you found this morning you had fallen, Maule, into precisely the position of last night. Sit down in it and do not move. You were drugged, remember. Behave as if you were still drugged."

SIR HUMPHREY obeyed, pulling up the chair, sat down in it, facing that dead body gruesomely motionless at the end of the table. His blanched countenance looked almost drugged, in fact, in the tension of the moment.

Q. Q. reverted to the hand. It lay limp in his.
"Fräulein Clara Weidmann!" he said, in "Fräulein Clara weidmann!" he said, in "You will respond to my commands, and to my commands only! Look into my eyes!"

The woman sighed. She moved her head

slightly, stared into Q. Q.'s eyes.

Q. Q. went on.

"You will hear my voice when I speak to you, and only when I speak to you. You will hear no one else. You will see no one in this room except Sir Humphrey Maule and Mr. Loftus. Any other individuals will make no impression whatever on your consciousness. It will seem to you that they are not present. Last night, you and your father left these rooms soon after eleven o'clock. It will seem to you that you are back at that hour, that you are living over again what-ever happened after it." He turned to Se-bright. "You will note, Sebright, that I am bright. "You will note, Sebright, that I am giving the lady no specific suggestions of what did happen."

The little old man wriggled half out of

Sebright's grasp. "Clara!" he "Clara!" he cried gaspingly. "Clara! Listen to my voice! Clara! You will obey -me only!"

"Gag him, Sebright!" said Q. Q. Sebright clapped a big hand over the man's mouth.

The woman in the chair, however, seemed not to have heard his voice. She remained

immobile. "Now then, Fräulein Weidmann-stand up!" Q. Q. spoke quietly, but authoritatively.

She stood up.

"You have said good-night to Sir Hum-phrey and Mr. Loftus. Where are you?"
"In the taxi." She spoke in a far-away

"in the taxl. She spoke in a laraway voice. "I cannot stand in it."
"Sit down, then." She sat on the arm of the chair. "Talk as you talked then."
"Du hast die Schlüssel?" The words "Du hast die Schlüssel?" The words came automatically, spontaneously, a look of eager cunning suddenly vivid in her beautiful face. "Famos!" She gabbled quick German I could not catch. "Ja-ja. Zwei Stunden-ja-sicher!"

"Two hours," said Q. Q. "Those two hours have now passed. It is a quarter past one. Where are you now?"

"Here." She stood like one in a trance. "How did you get here?"

"How did you get here?" "We let ourselves in with the keys we took from Sir Humphrey's pocket." She spoke like one who answers questions in her

Focused on her though I was, I saw, from the corner of my eye, the little old man wriggling impotently in Sebright's strong

grasp.
"You are living through that experience again. It is, to your consciousness, a quar-ter past one. Where did you stand when the clock marked that hour?"

"We were just coming in the door. Q. Q. led her—almost pathetically som-nambulistic—across to the door, released her. "Behave just as you did then. It is real to you-the experience all over again.

BELOW PAR..?



"I WAS a wreck and I knew it. Al-"I WAS a wreck and I knew it. Although young, scarcely twenty, indigestion had taken a firm hold; my complexion was bad, vitality gone and life looked black. I had tried everything and yeast had been recommended to me. "How absurd, I mused. 'Yet if I only dared hope!" At the end of a month my complexion was noticeably improved, my stomach working properly and my entire system rejuvenated. Miracles like this cannot happen in a day, but now I am the picture of health."

[Extract from a letter from Mrs.

(Extract from a letter from Mrs. Arthur R. Pagnam, R. F. D. No. 29, Stamford, Conn.)



"AT the age of forty I found myself slipping in health. I was troubled with indigestion, constipation and nervous debility. I had read about people taking Fleischmann's Yeast, and ordered some. A while later, in answer to a friend's inquiry, I was surprised to hear myself reply, 'I feel like a prise-fighter,' and realized then that I had not felt any sign of indigestion for some time, and was putting in ten to twelve hours' hard brain work daily. I knew I was back again."

(A letter from Mr. W. L. King of Washington, D. C.)



"FIVE years ago I could answer to the description of the 'rundown, nervous, suffering woman' in the patent medicine ads. My sallow complexion was my greatest worry and I was always troubled with constipation. I had taken medicine for four years, but the doctor said that drugs could not effect a permanent cure. I learned to eat Fleischmann's Yeast. Today I am frequently complimented on my fresh complexion and am told I don't look more than twenty-two. I hold the championship record for swimming and tennis in our club. I still have one incurable habit—half a cake of Fleischmann's Yeast daily with a glass of milk."

(Mrs. Ella Fitzgeraid of Ypailanti,

(Mrs. Ella Fitzgerald of Ypsilanti, Michigan)

Yeast is especially delicious on toasted crackers or as a sandwich filler" with jam or peanut butter.

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"I WENT fishing up North, about 250 miles from Vancouver in the Spring of 1920, and had an attack of boils in a very bad form, which lasted for one year and five months. A fisherman friend made me a bet that Fleischmann's Yeast would cure the boils if I took 3 cakes a day. He said he would buy the yeast cakes. In 10 days my boils began to dry up, in 4 weeks only the marks were left and no new boils coming. I lost the bet and paid for the cakes, but I have not been troubled with boils since."

(Mr. John Faulkner, Nanaimo, B. C.)



ONCE more she came suddenly to an uncannily vivid life. She crept forward stealthily from the door, turned to glance over her shoulder as at some one following her, made a beckoning gesture. She whispered swift foreign words. I caught the German for: "Yes—yes. Helpless—both of them. Quick!"

Q. Q. and I stood back with Sebright and his still silently struggling prisoner, left the center of the room clear save for the two figures of Loftus and Sir Humphrey sitting motionless in their chairs. We watched her come across the room, as though watching

a drama on the stage.

She went to the writing-desk, pulled open first one drawer and then another in a hurried search for something, uttered a little low cry of satisfaction, turned from it. In her hand was a revolver, Sir Humphrey's own revolver. (Q. Q., I remembered, had carefully inquired after its normal resting-place, put it back during the time we waited.) She held it out to some one in-

"Here it is!" she said, in rapid, low-voiced German, her whole being keyed to a breathless tension. "Quick! You do it!"

She released her hold upon the weapon, and it dropped upon the floor. But to her it must have seemed that the invisible person had taken it. She gave a little involuntary jump—uncannily dramatic in that silence—as though at a detonation.

"Gott!" she whispered in German. "What a noise!" Then she sprang toward that collapsed figure of Loftus in his chair, peered at it closely, nodded her head quickly in reassurance. "Tot!"

She looked round, looked at Sir Humphrey, his eyes staring and breathing deeply as he sat in his chair. She went across to him, took up his hand, spoke in English. "You hear me?" she said sharply.

"Yes." Sir Humphrey gasped as he looked at her.

"Look into my eyes!"

He looked, kept staring at them for a minute or two of silence in which she fixed her gaze on his.

"When you wake up, you will know that you killed your friend Loftus. I tell you how it happened. After putting us in the taxi, you came back here, went straight to your desk, took out your revolver and shot him where he sat. You will not wake until seven o'clock. You will remember nothing about us except seeing our taxi go away down the street. But you will be so sure that you shot Loftus that you will give yourself up to the police tomorrow morning, and whenever the crime is mentioned you will accuse yourself. You understand?" "Yes." Sir Humphrey's voice came from

far away.
"Good God!" exclaimed Sebright.

Fascinated by the drama he was watching, he must for the moment have relaxed his grasp upon his prisoner. I saw the little man wriggle—and the next moment there was a deafening detonation, a faint film of smoke. The woman staggered, went headlong to the floor.

Q. Q. jumped to her, twisted her over, shook his head.

"Through the heart," he said.

I turned, with him, to look at the little old man from whom, at that moment, Se-

old man from whom, at that moment, Sebright was wrenching a small automatic pistol. Dr. Hugo Weidmann snarled at us. "Better for her than your English law," he said. He relapsed suddenly into cool

he said. He relapsed suddenly into cool cynicism. "All right, Mr. Quayne. You've won. We did it. But before I go with this gentleman,"—he jerked his head toward Sebright,—"I'd like to know—professionally—what spell you put on my daughter?"

Q. Q. smiled at him.

"Simple, my dear sir. When we were both assisting her in her sudden and not unnatural faintness, I picked your pocket of the little vial I guessed you carried there for emergencies,"—he held it up,—"the stuff with which you drugged Loftus and Maule last night. And I gave her a good stiff dose of it in her brandy. As I have already remarked—diamond cut diamond, eh?" He ignored the little old man's savage curse, turned to Sir Humphrey, sitting there strangely stiff in his chair, shook him by the shoulder. "Wake up, Maule!" he said jocularly. "Seven o'clock!"

SIR HUMPHREY stirred, looked about him, jumped up with a sudden horror on his features. His eyes met Sebright's. "All right, Sir Humphrey," said Sebright.

"All right, Sir Humphrey," said Sebright.
"We know now who killed poor Mr. Loftus."
Sir Humphrey stood like one dazed.

"Yes," he said. "God forgive me—I did
—I know I did! Though I don't know
why! Take me in charge!"

We all stared.
"Good Lord!" said Q. Q. "I believe she's

hypnotized him again!"
Sebright looked not only bewildered but

bad-tempered.
"All this," he grumbled, "is going to sound fantastic in a court of law, Quayne."

"Never mind, Inspector," said a gasping, croaking voice. "It wont come to a court of law." It was the little old man who spoke. His face was livid, dreadful, with foam at the corners of his mouth. "When I first came in—saw Quayne—I—I guessed—it was—hands up. Took—precautions." He grinned, horribly. "Little glass capsule—held in mouth—too—too clever for you—He wilted suddenly in Sebright's strong grasp

on my —went down, lifeless, upon the floor when that grasp was released.

LAME DUCKS

(Continued from page 64)

Mr. Cromer, what I do. You might as well know that. But I can't promise to be agreeable, you know. I think I'm really better off alone."

better oft atone.

"Oh, I don't know," he persisted goodnaturedly. "What's the difference? I am
too—maybe. We're a couple of lame ducks,
Miss Crewe—that's what we are! At least
we can be sorry for each other."

She made a little shrugging gesture.

"Oh—sorry!" she said scornfully, but she rose and walked out of the park with him.

"The American is not so sad today, look you," remarked a little French boy to his

"Naturally—he has a lady to talk with," she replied. "What will you?"

And they returned to their rubber ball.

IN a cozy little tea-room, all faded pink chintz and tiny inconvenient tables, they drank strong, steeped French tea, and ate the moist babas flavored with rum for which she admitted a sweet tooth. By a sort of mutual understanding they avoided any further discussion of the black curtain so lately rolled down on their little dramas, and she made an honest effort to respond to what he honestly tried to make entertaining for her. He wasn't going to have her—a perfect stranger—sacrifice herself for his sorrows. He'd show her!

sorrows. He'd show ner!
So they laughed at the hideous little lapdogs that accompanied their owners to the
tea-tables, and marveled at the family of
three beside them, where the grandmother
drank two bottles of beer with chocolate
éclairs, the young mother ate cheese with a
great cup of sweet chocolate, and the thin,
big-eyed little boy drowned endless pastries
with strong tea!

"Those children," she complained, "are eating all the time, and yet they're always thin."

"But look at the stuff they feed 'em." he said. "What could you expect? They're fat in Brittany, though—I was up there sketching, summer before last, and you ought to see 'em run in at noon, rubbing their tummies and howling, 'Soup, soup, grand-mother—I'm hungry!'"

"Do you know a little place called Pabu?" she asked. "I was there all one summer with a piano they hauled ten miles in an oxcart."

While she talked in that odd, low voice, he drew rapidly on the tablecloth, and as she watched the quaint roofed cottages, the just-indicated church*spire, the old peasant in her coif, and the fat, ecstatic youngster, pressing an empty bowl to his full stomach, she smiled irresistibly.

"That would make an awfully good poster," she said. "Couldn't you draw those—later? If you made them big enough?"

He shrugged a disdainful shoulder.

"Maybe—probably—oh, Lord, to think of it!" he groaned, and she bit her lip and spoke hastily of the opera.

"If you really want to go, I could get you all the tickets you want—student rates," she added: "they're very nice about that. I went all the time, my first year here. If—if money's any object, it makes a difference." "Oh, money's going to be an object, all right, now!" he answered ruefully. Then:

"Of course up to—up to this winter, I didn't have to worry. I've got about twelve hundred a year of my own, thank God, and from now on, that's got to do. You see, I had a three-year scholarship, in California,

—I'm from Los Angeles,—and I took a couple of prizes over here, and so things were pretty soft for me. And this infernal Swiss trip was a pretty swell affair—we lived like fighting cocks. One of my classmates invited five of us as his guests, and he never let us spend a cent—poor Jim, he was awfully broken up over me!"

A softer note came into his voice; his eyes lost their bitterness for the first time. "I know," she answered, musing. "Sue Kittredge—she took me to St. Moritz—keeps

Kittredge—she took me to St. Moritz—keeps writing me to come to Egypt with her, or anything I want to do. But I'm through with it. No more rich friends for me! They've finished me."

"Then you're not—what will you do?"
"Ob, I'm all right; it isn't that," she answered absently. "I've got just what you've got—twelve hundred. Grandmother left us each that, my sisters and me. I got a three-year scholarship too—at the Boston Conservatory. Fall River, I come from. And I took a Flagler prize, too. But that's all over now, of course. However, nobody can starve, over here, on twelve hundred."

starve, over here, on twelve hundred."
"No, indeed," he agreed heartily. "That's
the way I feel. And you can hear all the
music you want yery cheap."

"Oh, music!" she cried, and her voice sank suddenly, and grew rich and angry. It was like a bell, tolling. It startled him.

"I never want to hear any more music!" she said, still in that new, vibrant tone. "I thought I'd take some courses, somewhere-literature, or something. And go to the galleries, the Louvre and the Luxembourg and all that. I don't know anything about them—I never had any time. I might as well."

—I never had any time. I might as well."
"You couldn't teach, could you," he suggested, "—though I suppose, over here—"

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After rubbing in the rich, creamy Mulsified lather, give the hair a good rinsing. Then use another application of Mulsified, again working up a lather and rubbing it in briskly as before. After the final washing, rinse the hair and scalp in at least two changes of clear, fresh, warm water. This is very im-

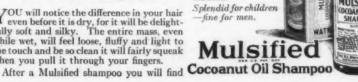
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"Oh, yes," she answered wearily, "I could A first-prize Conservatoire can always coach. Especially Americans-they think we can teach them the tricks and push them along faster. Madame as much as offered me- But I turned it down. I'd as offered me-rather starve!"

She flashed petulant eyes at him. For the first time her artist's temperament flared out, and he could imagine her crashing great

chords across a listening audience.
"Oh, what's the use?" she said, sunk into gray ashes again. "I must go now, Mr. Cromer. Thank you for the tea.'

BEFORE he could quite realize it, they had separated, and he went back to his early bed, forgetting to dine, for he spent the last late daylight in tidying the studio, putting away his sketching-tools and plates, arranging the scattered studies carefully, and choosing out the bolder, posterlike designs almost unconsciously.

"I might as well do something," he mut-"There's no good making an utter tered.

slump!"

He hurried to the park the next day at noon, surprised at the eagerness with which he scanned the little dell, the disappointment with which he saw that there was but one woman there, a charmingly dressed French girl, playing with a little French boy. But as she tossed his ball back to him with a clumsy, left-handed throw, his heart beat quicker, for it was Janet Crewe. Janet Crewe, in a delightful springlike frock of rough gray silk with a deep embroidered girdle of wine color about her slim, straight hips, and a little round hat with a great wine-colored flower over the brim, pulled down over her eyes! Her shoes and stockings were gray too, and looked like Greek

sandals on her long, narrow feet.

As he advanced, lifting his hat, she stared for a moment at the tall stranger. The day was warm, even too warm, the skies softly overcast, and not an overcoat was to be seen But it was not the trim gray suit of light English tweed that made him look so young, suddenly; it was his blue eyes, which she had never before seen. The disfiguring black goggles were off, and with them he had cast off almost ten years—she had thought him forty, at least. There was even a little color in his cheeks, which had been so pale, and the tint of gray over each temple looked like a theatrical make-up. she said.

"Why-why, Mr. Cromer!" startled.

"Hallo!" he answered, with a breezy Californian cordiality. "Isn't it great? the oculist this morning, and he said to take the glasses off wherever there wasn't any glare. So here I am! What a stunning dress—you look about twenty-five, today!"
"I am twenty-five today!" she answered,

blushing a little under his frank admiration. "And Sue sent me this for a birthday pres-It is nice, isn't it? Speaking of age, though, you don't look so very aged yourself, you know!"

The little French boy took his ball and with a polite, "Bonjour, madame! Bonjour, monsieur!" wandered discreetly away

monsteur!" wandered discreetly away.
"Oh, I'm not quite ready for an old man's home," he said gravely. "I was thirty-two the day—the day I met you."
"But—but that was only day before yesterday!" she began, amazed, and he smiled.
"Yes. It seems longer, doesn't it?" he

said.

"I—I hoped you might come," she began gain hurriedly. "Madame gave me two again hurriedly. tickets for 'Aïda' this afternoon, and I thought you might— It's really going to be very interesting, I think. There'll be an Italian Aïda—Muzio. It's quite a gala, and the seats are fine, way down in the orches-

"I'd love to," he answered, "and you must lunch with me, wont you-at Prunier's, being your birthday! We'll have champagne!" "I'd love to," she repeated, adding doubt-lly: "But ought we? I mean—Prunier is so awfully expensive."

"Oh, expense!" he cried scornfully. "I'm rich, woman! I'm a Rockefeller! What do

you think-I've sold a poster!'

"No!" she wondered. "Where? How?" "I woke up at six," he said, "and I just felt like it, somehow, and I went at that Breton thing I drew on the tablecloth, yesterday-you remember? I had it half done by ten, nearly, and suddenly I thought how jolly it would be for a soup ad. You know they have such stupid things, sometimes. I phoned Bartier to come over and see ithe was on that trip of Jim's, and his father is French manager of the Gallo-American Soup Company, you know. Barty was crazy about it, and took it right off in a taxi to his father, and the old gentleman offered me a thousand francs for it, finished, and paid me on the nail! Barty says I can get a contract for a series, if I want. What do you know about that?"

"Fine!" she said eagerly. "Fine! I do congratulate you, Mr. Cromer! And what do you think I've done? I've earned some money too—I've given my first lesson!'
"No! You haven't! Honestly?" No!

"Honestly," she assured him. "I went over to see Madame-I thought it was the only decent thing to do, she's been so kind and if I ever intend to begin, I must, you see, while they remember me and are interested. She gave me the tickets, and mentioned the coaching if I ever wanted to, and I apologized for the way I'd acted, and said I'd be glad to, whenever she had anything. She was rushed to death, and handed me a girl from Milwaukee-very talented. worked an hour with her. A hundred francs. I'm to have her twice a week. It's not much, of course-

"But it's everything! It's a beginning!" he cried enthusiastically.

"Whew! You must be a crackerjack, Miss Crewe, to be able to do that without playing, yourself! I-I wish I could have heard you!"

"Don't let's talk about that," she said in that new, deep voice. "Let's hurry for our luncheon—the opera begins awfully early you know, here.

E went sensibly home, a thrilling after-HE went sensibly nome, a moon ended, and rested his tired eyes in a long, dark sleep.

"But it was worth it!" he muttered. "How plucky she was to stick it out-you could see the music hurt her. Lord. must have gone through, that girl!"

It seemed after this that they moved alone, in Paris. The others were shadows, didn't count, hadn't that terrible, black brink behind them, over which they had so nearly slipped. When they sat, cheerful and friendly, in the little park on sunny after-When they sat, cheerful and noons (for both had been ordered a halfday in the open-air; he for eye-strain, she for the anemia produced by shock and persistent underfeeding), they actually forgot, for whiles, the cruel strings to which their bright balloons of sympathy and comradeship were attached. But on gray, damp days, when the museums to which he led her meant fatigue to her and a constant, cutting memory to him, the strings tugged cruelly and the poor little balloons wavered. and fell, sometimes, into the old dull pit of misery, and the maimed and hopeless future rose like a clammy mist, over and be-tween them. Sometimes she left him hurriedly with a brusque excuse; sometimes he failed to come to their green corner, and she knew that he was tramping, tramping doggedly, unhappy and alone.

I shouldn't have let him show me those etchings," she would groan to herself; "it's too much for him! How he must have suf-

And curiously (or, so it seemed to her, for she had not yet learned that the fact is as real as sorrow itself), the pain she felt for him eased her own pain; the thoughts she sent to him returned to her in peace.

After a black week, when she had set herself, with a certain amount of success, to diverting him from the demon that clawed him, he admitted that his one resource-after her-had for the moment gone. The soupposters, though successful, bored him; other ideas pushed into his mind.

"It seems crazy," he confided to her, "but I've got it into my head to do a Swiss one!"

"No!" she cried, wincing. "You don't mean that? Is that—is that really wise, do you think?"

"I don't know if it's wise," he answered obstinately, "but I seem to want to get it out of my system! I'd like to do a girl on skis, with—with the other things just indicated, you know, and a little tiny village in the valley. Everything black and white. but just the girl. If I could get a model,

He paused and grinned, a little sourly. "But that's the devil of it," he added; "suppose I lost my nerve and brained the girl with the skis! I just might, you know, and it might be awkward—she might not understand!"

"Would you like me to pose for you?" e asked quietly. "I should understand she asked quietly. "I should under and you wouldn't brain me!" "Wh-what! You!" he gasped.

"You You-you couldn't! It's too

"Why not?" she said. "If that's what you want to do-that's what you want to do! And I seem to be the logical candi-Two lame ducks should help each shouldn't they? Where is your studate. other, shouldn't they? exactly?"

"You're wonderful!" he said. "I'll-I'll never forget this, my dear-never. Can you come-I mean, ought I to have anybody

there?" he added doubtfully.

"Oh, Lord," she cried irritably, "what! What difference do we make to anyody? You're not a Frenchman!"
"No," he agreed, "I'm not. That's true.

Will you come tomorrow? In the morn-

"It will have to be the afternoon, tomorrow—I have my pupil. She wants me to take a friend of hers, privately. The trouble is, she's nothing to do with the Conservatoire, and I haven't any piano. I've got to see how much it will cost to rent one, and if it's going to be worth it-for one, you know.

"I see. Well, it will be worth it, soon, for you're bound to get more," he said he said "Come at two, then, will you?"

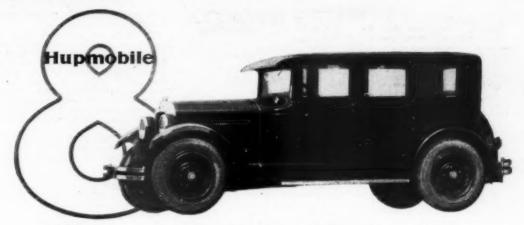
SHE came in a taxi, with skis and poles, and when she threw off her long, light coat, he laughed with delight and stared at In a flame-red jersey, rough white breeches, red stockings, and a red cap pulled over her ears, she looked like an Italian She had rouged her cheeks, and above them her eyes glowed larger and darker. She appeared to be barely over twenty.

"For heaven's sake! You ought to have your chaperon with you!" he cried. "Here, don't put them on—throw them over your shoulder and step out!'

"If I'd known I was going to pose to a first-year art-student, I'd have brought my chaperon!" she answered, smiling at him.

In his dull blue smock and collarless as Byron, he was amazingly boyish; he might have been the son of the worn-cheeked man in the black glasses she had met a month ago

"There! Just like that! And this min-ute—do you mind?" he urged, and she stood obediently in front of the white sheets he had hung on a line, and talked, since he



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she marveled, striding ahead like an Arctic Diana, smiling as she strode.

"But of course you can do it! If he can, ou can. What difference does it make, you can. What difference doe anyway?" she answered herself.

It was not a hard pose, and she was able to stand longer than he had expected. While she rested, she stared, surprised, at a mag-nificent grand piano in the corner.

"But—but you don't play, surely?" she asked. "It's a Gaveau, isn't it? So much better than the Pleyels. I did so miss my own piano at first!'

"Oh, no, that's Jim's," he said carelessly. "He's always wanted me to store it for him -he's going home for the summer. I didn't want to bother with it, before, but I told him yesterday he could send it over, if I could use it for a friend who wanted to give lessons on it, and he said I could do anything I wanted with it. I can get out, you know, when you need the place.

She breathed deep, a lump in her throat "That-that was awfully kind," she said

"That—that was awfully kind," sne said slowly. "You—you have done a great deal for me, Mr. Cromer."

"And what have you done for me?" he cried hotly. "What are you doing—now? Do you suppose I don't know? Do you think I don't understand? I—I was a beast to accept it!

He stared at her strangely. She sprawled, resting, in a long wicker chair, one boyish breeched leg thrown over the other, her red cap pushed to one side on the tumbled, strong dark hair. He might never have seen her before.
"No, no," she said and smiled. "No, no!"

"Will you look at it?" he said shyly.
"Will you tell me if you think it's worth it? It's-it's pretty coarse work, you know, but of its kind, I don't think it's so bad. It

-it seems to mean a lot to me, somehow-I had to do it-to finish it.

She strode out, smiling at herself, blood against the snow, her cheeks, oddly enough, as white as their background. Great black eyes, at once frightened and exultant; strange, black lines that indicated boldly the mountain sweeps; tiny black roofs and steeples, brushed into a distant valley; just glimpsed around a curve, the hunched shoul-ders and steering hands of a flying bob-sled. It was almost Japanese, daring, arrest-

ing.
"Why, I think it's wonderful!" she said;
"it's perfectly stunning! Worth it? I should
think it was! I'm so proud to have been able to help you!"

"It's only you that can help me," he answered slowly, staring at her like a man waking from a dream; "there's nobody else understands-can ever understand. Heaven knows there's little enough I can do for you, my dear. What could I, a man like me? And what you might have had! But you seem to feel—you say I do—oh, Janet, couldn't we help each other, always? Could

She leaned to him, quite simply, and laid her head, sighing, on his shoulder, trembling as he kissed her hair. It had not occurred to her to call it love, what she felt for him, but she knew very certainly that to stand there with him, like this, was the answer to all her bitter questionings, the solution of all that was unreconciled, the reason, now, for living.

"If you think so-I think so," she said

in her new, deep voice.

The soft, veiled sun of Paris streamed in a broad fan of light across the tall easel and struck the quiet shining piano. He buried his eyes in her dark hair, to avoid its beam, and she slipped her left arm around his neck, for the right hung at her side; but even to lame ducks the world is still kind, and life is still rich-with love!

THE LAST CARD

(Continued from page 49)

be glad to have you fix a day. I've k of got my tongue hanging out for that

She flung him a, "Wait and see, Mr. Porcher," and slammed her door. Old lizard, she knew his sort; they smelled like wine-casks. From the drawer she took the kerchief, flax-blue—netlike—yes, it became her, softened, cooled her. She fastened it with the pin Ted had given her, and stepped out onto her balcony. Shadows were fold-ing over the garden; the sunset breeze rustled the dry palm-leaves; a lemony scent rustied the try paint taxes, and came wafted—it was full-flower season. Was he waiting till dusk? He wanted, she knew to avoid all breath of scandal. He knew, to avoid all breath of scandal. had arranged with her that she should say she was going back to England on the Union Castle boat that came in tomorrow morning, while he would give out a trip to the Azores on that Royal Mail liner. How she had begged him not to tell his

wife, but to write from the Azores! No good! That was the worst of decent men —they would, as they called it, "play the game." How damned ironical that what had made her think of him so softly should be imperiling her rescue! Her fingers beat a tattoo on the veranda railing. Rescue! It was neck or nothing this time! One managed along to a certain age, and then, but for a stroke of luck like this, dropped into the everlasting pit with pigs like old Porcher, and presently not even them, but raddled old age and grinding poverty, or a drugged death!

She counted up her lovers on her fingersincluding her two husbands-just fifteen; and except her first husband, not one for whom she had felt real passion. And, moody in the sudden Southern dusk, she wondered how on earth Ted Cordew could

take her for a decent woman; why didn't he read her life, its scheming, defiances, hard, naked realism? And she gave a little laugh. Again ironical! His decency had veiled her Again ironical! His decency had that be-drawn out of her the softness that be-longed to "woman in love," dropped it over what anyone would call her who knew, and yet-did not know! An easy word, "vamp." She clenched her hand on the iron so that it hurt her. No looking back! No mulling! She wanted all her wits. What should she do if he didn't come? The Royal Mail sailed at noon. She knew—like a writer who has reached the climax of his story that never again could she bring Ted Cordew up to a scratch so fateful and foreign to his training. He was heated à point, and would nevermore be malleable to the pitch of such extreme resolve.

"Before tea-time," he had said; and it was dark already-the lights of his hotel to right of her, lights of the liner to the left-lights and the loom colored like dark grapes, and the acacia tree outside her window with the light from the windows above her shining on its white flowers. And the fraudulence of life struck her like a fist! A-fraud! Such loveliness, and such cruel depths, so great a parade of promise and so clutching a despair!

He couldn't come before dinner now! If he came at all! Dismay surged through her. Had he funked it? Had that "poor thing" his wife prevailed on his "better nature?" Cant! As if all life wasn't just a struggle for existence-creature against creature-one life good as another!

What was before herself if she threw up the sponge! Eh? What? She turned back



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into her room with the thought: "My black satin is lower cut. Not the flame-color!" To put on flame-color, and sit in it alone here, waiting!

SHE turned on the light and began to change. She did up her hair in a new way that he hadn't seen. She scented her shoulders, took from the trunk the black satin, and laid it on the bed. Her face! If one could change the worn, the tired-out face! She sat with closed eyes; but her lips went on quivering. One did not work miracles, cure wrinkles and sharpened features by just ccasing to see; and with a sudden quick relentlessness she stared into the mirror. Such as she was! Such as she was! "My ncck's still good!" she thought. "And my eyes!" She started on the rest. Long, long. delicately laying on and rubbing off, aiming for something that should shine out among the masks that women wore, so crude, so overcolored. She worked hard, with a grim intensity, as one works at a picture. She finished, smiled at herself, and hastily ceased to smile. Better without a smile, better with the lips just parted, and the lengthened lids just raised.

"Sha'n't go down to dinner," she thought.

"Can't eat a blessed thing!"

To sit alone at her little table, with that red-faced old clergyman at right angles, and those two skinny Scotch old maids, and that

old English major who eyed her so, and the young man who stammered, with his sainted mother opposite, and old Porcher round the corner—ah, that old swine had read her! Only—was his version authorized? Was it really truer than Ted Cordew's

She got up from before the glass and put on the black, the low-cut frock. Some-thing in her hair? Dared she—one hibiscus flower? She opened the window wide again. Down there to the right they grew; she could find them in the dark. And she stepped out and down the steps. The whole thing seemed to her unreal as she went. The garden, the moonlight on the water, the lights, the silence, and herself moving through it. What was in a flower—a flower of the hibiscus that young girls wore? But she plucked it—red even in the dusk. Grass, flower, leaf, odor, moonlight and the hush— all breathing in the darkness—strange feel-Damned sentiment, like the beating and the aching in her heart! Sound of oars grinding in the rowlocks, jingle of a belated carro's bells, a long chime—eight o'clock! The pigs were feeding! She stole back to her room, and put the flower in her hair. No mistake! It lighted her up, balanced the softly whitened, black-eyed mask, the red in the hair, the red in the lips, neither too red now! For a moment she stared, content, moved by her own face! If he could come this minute! She was a work of art. She lighted a cigarette and sat down be-

fore herself, turning out the light, so as not to lose that precious momentary confidence. If he delayed, the lines, the hollows, the fever would come back-the mask would give, seduction die. Such a day—oh, such a day! Suspense! It wore one out! Her last card—wouldn't she even have a chance to play it? She could hear the jingle of plates and dishes down the corridor, the diners' voices, when the room door was opened. Nine o'clock-he might come any moment now! Smoking cigarette after cigarette, from suspense she slipped into coma, a state almost of damned well not caring whether he came or not. Fed up— The room smelled rank of the fed up! cheap tobacco; just visible in the mirror, her image seemed hollowing before her eyes. What did it matter? Half-past nine! Ten o'clock! He was not coming! It was all over; she had lost! And suddenly her heart beat horribly. Footsteps outside, a knock on the door, the porter's voice.

"Mrs. Cordew to see you, madame."

With all she had thought of, hoped, expected, dreaded—she had never thought of that! And stiffened to the soul, rigid. that ! breathless, she rose from the chair and said:

"Turn up the light!" Hatted, not "dressed"—the figure in the doorway! And while she uttered a greeting, her mind groped vaguely for the meaning of that. The door was shut. The woman's face looked swollen about the eyes, patchy—been crying, of course—couldn't take her gruel!

"I just came to say good-by. wished—" What did that mean—triumph?

Ted mished!

"Good-by?"

The woman's gloved finger-tips were twisting, her cheeks mottled as she spoke. Yes, we called on our way to the ship.

We're going to Brazil." Right between the eyes! A wonder she didn't spin and fall!

"That's very sudden."
"I thought I should like to go."

Like to go! That was good! She had not meant to laugh; and the sound seemed to rip off every covering; and there were suddenly two breathless beings, undisguised in wretchedness, hostility and desperation! For a moment only—then they were back in their coverings, as it were.

God! What a wooden figure standing there! She tore the window open.

"I'm afraid it's stuffy in here. I've been smoking. D'you mind a mosquito? It'll be charming in Brazil."

Cowards—men! Cowards! From the window she looked across at that woman planted on her defeat, and mocked her. "Sorry not to see him to say good-by!"

Ah, that brought her to life!
"Yes, he left it to me. We've been together a long time, you see. I think at our
age you should have let him alone—" Those eyes which had been crying, which had never seemed anything but bits of gray-blue glass, now had a stripping intensity. wasn't decent of you."

NOT decent! A horrible self-pity dimmed her eyes. She turned her back on that blocked-out figure, and the face all patched with past tears and present hate. Decent! Had she wanted anything but escape to decency, to rest—to— Her last chance! Had she wanted anything else? Hell! Why didn't the woman go? Hadn't she won! A mosquito pinged in past her—a sleep-

less night! Well, the night for them would be as sleepless! Some comfort, that! She wished them joy of their voyage—boxed up together, ten feet by eight! But the garden out there was all blurred for her, as if by rain; the white flowers of the acacia had gone out—no moon, no stars, not even the And in that blur of darkness liner's lights. the figure of the man who wouldn't come in, of the man sitting in his carro outside, seemed to come and stand as if formed from her own eyes. She could see his brown face, ever so brown, more than life size as if he had shrunk behind it! She could see him-poor phantasmagoric brutewilt and writhe under her gaze. Her chest swelled; her brow cleared; her eyes glowed; she would cling and whip his senses after he was gone! And he looked at her, he looked; he put up his hand, as if to ward her off, and even his brown face seemed to shrink. . . . The door! She started and turned round—gone—that woman—gone! A long minute to stand and listen till the bells of their carro tinkled out. Noir gagne, pair et passe! Draw the curtains— look for that mosquito! The red flower in her hair! How comic! How—comic! Petal from petal! She trod on them, and shut her eyes. Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow! Before her in the darkness the lean dry smile of old Porcher took shape.

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THE HEART OF KATIE O'DOON

(Continued from page 59)

"You mean Miss O'Brien," he stammered,

"Katie O'Doon!" she repeated.

"I beg your pardon, Miss O'Doon-"
"Katie!" she corrected. "You are to keep on calling me Katie, and I am to keep on calling you Father."

Still bewildered, he bowed deeply before this recently humble stage daughter who had been so suddenly elevated to an eminence far above his own. "Katie, then, if you wish it. But, Katie, in our changed public position, you of course do not wish to continue our former private relationship. "Of course I do!"

"Katie!" he breathed, staring at her. "Katie O'Doon! Katie, I appreciate the new standing that being your father will automatically give me, and I'll try to treat you with the respect due so fine a daughter from her father, even though he is only her stage father." Again he bowed deeply. stage father." 'Good night, Katie."

"Kiss me good night!" she ordered, obeying one of those strange impulses which now and then shot suddenly to the surface of her undiscovered being.

Aghast, Terry O'Doon stepped backward pace. "Why-why-" a pace.

'Kiss me!"

Then he understood-or thought he did. That good-night kiss was just a new idea of Miss O'Brien to belp maintain the pretense of their relationship. So he stooped, and his very deferential lips met hers. Then he stumbled away in amazement at what Fate had given him as a stage daughterhaving never a remote guess that the goodnight kiss of their rôles was on Katie's part the realest of real kisses given by a real daughter, suddenly love-hungry for her father, whom she had just then kissed for the first time in perhaps ten years.

PETER ROMAIN had seen that kiss, though he had heard nothing; and before Katie could enter her dressing-room,

"Nice to see you keep up the old-home stuff with your "father, Katie," he remarked.
"It's more than you do!" she snapped.
"It's more than you do!" she snapped.

He ignored this. "Slipped across to congratulate you, Katie. You went over fine."
"No thanks to you!"

Again Peter chose to overlook the brusqueness; for Peter was a young man with a quick and far-seeing mind, and he was not one to lose time when he had a vision. "Listen, Katie. You're good. I'm good. I've got an idea for a play that would give fat parts to both of us. We're going to be together in this show for the season. Why not work together, fifty-fifty split, on my play all these months?

"Hasn't it penetrated your bean yet, An-l Face? I've said it often enough! Regel Face? member it this time-you and I are never going to work together on anything!

This time Katie gained her dressing-room. A few minutes later, just before she left, Morris Blum saw her about the rehearsal for the following day. The always-busy Morris had been so busy that he had not had time to speak to Katie since the end of the play. He now gripped her hand, "Katie, I knew you could do it!"

"If I did it, Morris, it was because you made me do it!"

I counted very little. "You're wrong. You did it because it was in you to do it. Katie, there's more in you than anybody yet dreams of. Katie,"—he paused, then resumed in a subdued whisper,—"Katie, I don't know in what direction you're going, but you're going a long, long ways. I hope I'll have the good luck to help you along a

"Morris Blum," she exclaimed, sudden tears in her eyes, "what a friend you are! I never want a finer friend!"

"I'm glad you think that way about me," said Morris. Just a good friend,-although he loved her.-Morris had long since, after much quiet agony, accepted that as his final status and had gone about the affairs of his music.

Many individuals had said that Katie had done well on her first performance, but the newspapers did not say so. There is nothing more negligibly dead as news than a play that has announced the nearing of the end of its New York run, as "Bubbles o' Laugh" had already done. Not a critic, not a feature-writer, saw Katie. So Katie O'Doon remained as unknown to the great New York public as when she had done her part in the little sketch at Rogano's, or as when she had understudied her Aunt Maggie as the medium on the old houseboat.

Of course Lily Spencer came, and Madame Ravenal, and Amy Miller with her James Harmon, and many of Katie's friends from Madame Ravenal's shop; and of course all praised Katie. As for Billy Gordon, he was present at every performance. Also he was with Katie on every occasion when she would give him a minute. Adoration was in his eyes, but he was wise enough not to let it get into and out of his mouth, for he had a sharp memory of the evening at Rogano's when there had been a proposal and a scathing refusal in the record time of ten seconds flat. As for Katie, she really liked Billy Gordon, really liked to have him about when he was not an interference.

Finally there came a Saturday night when the electric lights which printed "Bubbles o' Laugh" on the big sign went out forever in New York, and Katie O'Doon fared forth upon the "road"-which word, in strictest orthodox theatrical usage, includes all of the United States except New York City.

Chapter Sixteen

OF the next few months in the history of Katie O'Doon there is little to record, except that they were months of strenuous routine. Katie noticeably improved in her part; she kept to the exercise that had been prescribed to develop her suppleness and grace; and every single day when there were not two performances and when she was within traveling distance of New York, she journeyed into the city and back in order to have a half-hour's vocal session with Mr. Gregory. Also, when the company played in any city for a week or more, Katie had a rented piano set up in her hotel room, and presently, by her intensive application for long hours, she learned to play it moderately well for a beginner.

Katie had no roseate dreams about her-self or her future. Her part in "Bubbles o' Laugh" was just a job into which a combination of events and personalities had thrust her—just a job, as washing clothes had been a job; and she was determined to do this later job as well as she had done the earlier job back in Cherry Lane.

Her father's inebriety remained her chief worry. Terry O'Doon continued to regard his stage daughter with the deference which was the due of one who professionally ranked far higher than did he; but constant intimacy gradually impaired his sense of responsibility toward Katie. Despite prohibition laws, he somehow managed to be half drunken all the time, and never had full con-sciousness nor his full powers; yet he was never so drunk that he could not handle adequately his bit in the play. This situation Katie had to force herself to accept,

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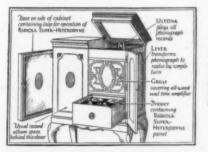
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although all the while she was blindly trying to think of the one right way out.

Of course she had her other worry concerning her father: that through some mis-chance Terry O'Doon might discover that she was his blood daughter. Katie clung to her idea that her only chance to handle her father for his own good was for him to continue to regard her as a respected business acquaintance. As a business acquaint-ance she believed she might in some way influence him; as a member of his family, his own daughter, she believed that her hold on him would be lost. Her point of view she believed to be solidly substantiated by the concrete facts of her mother's life: her mother had loved him, tried to save him, but the fact that she was his wife, was his own woman, had robbed her of all influence over him. Therefore Katie was going to be of strange blood. She thought she had put over her deception extremely well. There might be some blundering slip-say on the part of Peter Romain. But the greatest menace to her deception Katie saw as the drunken, kindly figure of her Aunt Maggie; if by any chance Aunt Maggie, who also believed her dead, should stumble upon the pair face to face, then Aunt Maggie would recognize the truth, and Katie's deception and hope for her father would crash into nothingness.

That fear was ever lurking in the back of her consciousness.

But she felt certain definite assurances against this danger. In the first place, she was not the star of the play, and the road-star's contract stipulated that she be featured solely in all paid publicity; therefore Katie's name rarely got into the newspapers. In the second place, Katie knew that Aunt Maggie's reading was confined almost solely to palms, horoscopes and the forged labels on bottles of synthetic gin.

KATIE was playing in Philadelphia during the fifth month of the company's tour, when she had her first real shock. One Friday afternoon she was glancing through a day-old newspaper, when she came up-on a column telling of the death by suicide of a New York lawyer of most honored reputation. His death, however, was not the chief point in the tragedy for Katie: the chief point was that this lawyer had been the sole administrator of Lily Spencer's es-tate, and his death revealed the fact that he had been speculating with Lily's money, and that there remained not one penny of

Katie sat in sickening horror as she realized the full significance of this disaster. The invalid aunt had died a year before. Katie vividly remembered that her friend had recently been drinking with more reckless gayety than ever, had also recently been giving herself with more reckless gayety and more reckless expenditure than ever to New York's smart night-life. And now travagant, pleasure-loving, lovable Lily had lost all her money and had learned no method of earning it! What was to become of Lily Spencer?

Katie would have gone straight to New York and Lily, but there was the performance of that night, and the two performances on Saturday. At ten o'clock Sunday morning, however, she was in New York, and a little later was at the Spencer house. Continued ringing of the bell brought no answer. She had already thought of Billy Gordon, and so she now telephoned him, and at already the spence of the state of the s and at eleven o'clock the pair met at the Ritz-Carlton at a very gloomy breakfast-table. Billy confirmed the worst news; for once, at least, the papers had been correct.

"Lily's absolutely cleaned out," he con-nued. "I offered to loan her all she wanted, and so did a lot of her friends. But she laughed, and thanked us, and refused us She said she never had lived on bor-



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93 W. Federal Street Boston, Mass rowed money and was not going to begin now. I think she already had some scheme in her mind, but she wouldn't tell what it was.

"Where can I find her now?" asked Katie. "I haven't the slightest idea. I haven't seen her in two days.

"Not seen her in two days!" exclaimed the shocked Katie. "Do you mean to say that you've let two days go by without looking Lily up, with her in all her trouble!"

"Oh, I've tried to look her up, all right.
I've been trying to find her all the time, and in every place I thought she might be, and by every means I could command except the police, since it might hurt Lily to become a police case. But I've not found a trace of She's disappeared."

'Disappeared

"Yes-and obviously disappeared by her own choice.

THEY talked on over their breakfast, whose excellence and elaborate service could not diminish the gloom. It was obvious to Katie that nothing could be done in New on a Sunday, with all offices of inquiry closed, to hunt down a girl who had voluntarily vanished; so, still in distress boarded the one o'clock train for Philadelphia. In this same absorbing distress over her missing friend, she entered her hotel and stepped through the door of her room-and there, at her ease in a rocking-chair, smoking a cigarette and reading a theatrical weekly, sat the lost Lily Spencer herself.

'Why-why-" gasped Katie.
'Katie!" cried Lily, throwing aside paper

and cigarette and springing up.

For a moment they held each other in a tight embrace. Then Lily pushed Katie from her, held a hand on each shoulder, and

demanded with mock severity:
"Give an account o' yerself, ye crazy Irish colleen! Here I be after wantin' to surprise ye, and when I comes makin' me dacent Sunday visit, ye make me sit waitin' for ye for the whole of an hour. Now, out with the truth, Katie O'Doon: where've ye been?

"In New York," replied the astounded atie. "I came here straight from the Katie.

"I left New York on the twelve o'clock," said Lily, dropping her imitation dialect.
"And I also came here straight from the rain. But why should a hard-working oung lady run over to New York on a Sunday morning for an hour's visit?'

"Why—why, I read a few days ago what had happened to you. But today was the first day I could get away. I went to New York to find you, and to see—and to see—"
"And to see if you could help me," Lily

finished for her.

"Why-why, yes," Katie admitted.
"Katie O'Doon," breathed Lily, "you are the dearest, damnedest, darlingest little fool

God ever made!'

Katie flushed, and for a moment could not speak. When speech did come, it switched back to the mystery.
"It was kind of you to come all the way

over here to Philadelphia to pay me a visit, but I don't-

"Pay you a visit!" interrupted Lily with joyous laugh. "Pay you a visit! Oh, what a joke!'

"But I don't understand why you disap-peared as you did," Katie persisted.

"Listen, my child, and you shall hear. Reason Number One: it takes money to belong to the crowd I was in, and since I had no money, I didn't belong-so I just promptly dropped out of it. Reason Number Two: I disappeared because I needed all my time for some business dickering and for my rehearsals."

"Your rehearsals? Rehearsals at what?" "Dancing. That's the only thing I seem to be much good at. And I've long had an

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idea in the back of my head that I'd rather like to be a professional dancer.

Katie remembered this idea.

"But-have you a decent opening yet?" "Better than that. I already have a job to dance.'

"Good! Where are you going to dance?"
"With Katie O'Doon. That's why I'm "With Katie O'Doon.

"Dance with me?" gasped Katie.
"Lily laughed at Katie's bewilderment. "Not exactly with you, but in your company. I'm taking Mitzi Malone's place, and am going to dance with Peter Romain. Signed the contract with Feinham last night, and have come on to hang around the show, picking up points and rehearsing with Peter, until Mitzi Malone leaves. She's been given her notice. I've been secretly rehearsing the last four days whenever Peter could run over to New York. From the beginning he's wanted me as his partner instead of Mitzi Malone; so when I went smash—well, you can guess the rest."

KATIE was suddenly sick over this stark fact of her friend, splendid despite her flaws, teaming up with Peter Romain. The association contained the germs of unguessable and endless danger for Lily Spencer.

"Don't do it! Please, Miss Lily-Here's "Stop right there, Katie O'Doon! where we straighten out one thing forever. For about two years you have kept up your infernal habit of 'Missing' me, and I've had to stand for it. Well, I don't stand for it any longer! You're better and finer in every way than I am, you little Mick! All I ever had was money, and that's gone. Besides, right now you hold a more important and better-paying job than I do. And, besides, you are headed up and I may be headed down for God knows what! So there! you ever 'Miss' me again, I'll bite a large piece out of the back of your neck! I want to hear you call me Lily right now! Say it!"

"Lily," Katie obeyed.

"That's good! Keep it up!"
"But, Lily," Katie went on with her protest, "that Peter Romain is a crook. know. I wouldn't trust him in a single thing. Without your suspecting it in ad-vance, he might involve you in some frightful situation! Please, Lily, don't be his dancing partner!"

Peter Romain dance?" Lily de-"Can manded.

Of course he can. I give him the credit of being a truly remarkable dancer."

"Then you've answered your own argument. All I want is a good dancing partner. I'm not as stupid as I look, and I know a little bit about this world we live in; so if Peter Romain ever puts anything unpleasant over on me, I'll blame just myself. No use talking any further, Katie. That subject's closed."

Katie realized that it was. An entirely different subject had been buzzing in the back of her head; and after a moment's silence she broached the new idea.

"Lily, are you willing to do me a favor?" "Surest thing you know! Just name it."
"During the balance of the tour would

"During the balance of the tour would you be willing to be my roommate?"
"Would I?" cried Lily, again embracing Katie. "I should say I will! It's the very thing I've wanted, only I've not had the nerve to ask you."

They chatted eagerly on about living together and about the show; and after a cities Verie with existent was the state.

time Katie said hesitantly:

"I saw Mr. Gordon in New York today, but didn't ask him about himself. I've heard nothing about him during all these months. Do you know whether he's settled down to work?"

"He still keeps his office, and sometimes goes to it for a few hours. But as for his working-Billy doesn't know what work means."

"I'm very sorry about that," Katie said quietly.

"I say, Katie, why don't you marry him? Oh, I know he's asked you, because he told me so himself-and told me that you had turned him down."

"I don't want to marry. And I'd never marry a man who wasn't enough of a man to try to do a man's work at somethingmatter how much I might love him.'

"Well, you just remember that Madeleine Forsythe has no such scruples!"

"Has she—has she—"
"I should say she has! These last few months she's been after Billy harder than ever. She's clever and smooth about it, but Madeleine's the sort of woman who goes after a man for all she's worth. And almost any man, if he can't have his first choice, will finally accept his second choice. She's a sticker, Madeleine is, and in the end she'lf land him!"

"I'm very sorry," Katie again said in her

quiet voice.

"A lot of good your being sorry will do him after Madeleine has landed him! She wants just his money, his position, his com-pany on public occasions. For the rest Billy can do as he pleases, be what he pleases, and it will be all the same to her. I can just see Billy Gordon after Madeleine's had about ten years' use of him!"

Katie made no response, and the subject

was no doubt that the change was for the better, for Lily was a born dancer. although she was now living with Katie, her personal habits did not change. She her personal nabits did not change. She was in every hilarious party. She was drinking perhaps even more recklessly than before. Several times Katie saw her father and Lily having their drinks together, her father taking his drink in the grand manner of a gentleman giving a toast to a lady. And to add to Katie's difficulty was her distressing feeling that she had no authority to try, by word or act, to restrain the be-havior of the splendid Lily Spencer, who had so recently lived in that splendid house just off Park Avenue.

The weeks and months which followed were filled with worry for Katie O'Doon, though her work did not suffer because of her worry. She thought and worried about her father. She thought and worried about Lily Spencer. And, although she admitted this was no affair of hers, she began to worry and think about Billy Gordon.

Chapter Seventeen

AT length the long road season of the "original" company of "Bubbles o' Laugh" was finished, and Katie and the rest of the cast returned to New York. New York would always mean home to her, since she had been born there; and more espe-cially would the lower East Side seem home. Often of nights, recognized by no one, she wandered down through old Cherry Lane and stood upon the familiar docks that thrust themselves out into the East River, swirling with its treacherous currents and stenchy with the oil and bilge-water of thousands of passing ships. She loved all this neighborhood; it had methered her; and at times she dreamed that later on she might make herself a real home down here.

But during Katie's last months upon the road many things had been happening in New York of which she had at the time been unaware. The great Feinham, despite his bluster of big words, was a very small manager indeed, as producing managers are estimated in New York. In his favor he had a driving egotism and comparative youth; but beyond paying his family and business bills, and taking care of some bad

speculations, "Bubbles o' Laugh" had merely earned him a small stake which he shrewdly calculated he must nurse along most care-

Feinham wanted in time to be a big manager, producing big successes, a figure who had a legitimate right to strut along Broadway. It was Morris Blum who started the new proposition going; Morris ap-proached Feinham with full knowledge of his man. The chief points of Morris' proposition were these: he, Morris, was to deliver a new musical comedy, writing all the music and lyrics and most of the book, and was to direct the production-all this at an extremely low figure. Katie O'Doon was to have the lead. The chief members of the touring company of "Bubbles o' Laugh" were to be kept. Morris knew of the sets of a failure which could be bought for next to nothing, and could be repainted.

It was the cheapness of the whole proposition which caught Feinham. Particularly was he attracted by the thought of having a leading lady at some fraction of one hundred and fifty dollars a week, whereas he knew he'd have to pay an established musi-cal comedy star a thousand in money and spend all his agonizing time in keeping her doing what was required of her. He told Morris to go ahead.

Thus it was, on Katie's return to New York, that Feinham in his best big-manager manner informed Katie that, as a favor to her, he had decided to give her a chance in a very fat part as leading lady in his forthcoming production. A few minutes later Morris Blum had opportunity to see Katie

"I'm ashamed, Katie, that there's not more money in this for you," he apologized. "You deserve a big raise. But I have no control over salaries—and Feinham has you under that old contract.

"That's all right, Morris. Father and I can easily live on a hundred and fifty. My concern is whether I can make good in this new part."

"There's another point, Katie—your part.
I've built the entire show upon you. And about you! Understand? It's—well, it's a bit personal. You see, the show starts with you as a poor East Side kid—and you can guess the rest. I'm sorry if it hurts you,

and I'll change it somehow if you say so."
"That's all right, Morris." She patted his shoulder as she might that of a brother. "Anything you ever write about me will be all right with me."

Katie could not have spoken more sin-cerely. She had a fierce pride of its sort, but there was nothing in her personal life that she was ashamed of. She would not have been shamed in the least if the whole world knew that not long since she had been a washerwoman and had done the wash of Mr. and Mrs. Kirschbaum and the numerous little Kirschbaums.

HERE followed a month of what seemed to be unceasing rehearsal. Then Katie decided that her rôle and the play would be improved if she had a smart gown for a change in the last act. By now she knew Feinham well enough to know that he would not supply the gown; so after con-sulting her savings, she went over to Madame Ravenal's shop and was immediately admitted into the office she had once regarded as sacred and impenetrable. She had not seen Madame Ravenal for almost a year.

"So it's you again, Katie O'Doon," Madame Ravenal snapped across her big glass-

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is Il

topped desk, in the manner Katie knew so well. "Back after your old job, I suppose?"
Katie explained that she was merely back after a gown, and had the cash with which to pay for it, but wished Madame Ravenal's advice in its selection. The dressmaker questioned her, and Katie explained.



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"So you're playing the lead in a show that opens next Friday in that old dog-town of Stamford, and you need a gown," Madame Ravenal crisply summed up. She touched one of the many ivory buttons on "The State of Connecticut should her desk. abolish Stamford and all its other dog-towns as public nuisances!" Just then Miss Grennell, the competent forelady, entered, obviously in quick response to the thrust upon that ivory button. "Grennie, Mary O Brien, here, wants a new gown. I want you to see that she gets the best in the shop, and that she's charged at our cost price, and that you take no money from her and never send her a dunning bill. —Run along, Mary; you don't need my advice, for you know more about clothes than I do. Here's wishing you luck at Stamford."

T the try-out Friday night at Stamford, Madame Ravenal occupied an inconspicuous seat. She spoke to no one except Morris Blum, and she made Morris promise to keep secret the fact that she had been present. She thought much that night. She thought much the following morning, and carefully considered her bank-account and that section of her books dealing with "ac-counts payable." Finally she reached for her telephone and spoke with Billy Gordon. Within thirty minutes thereafter Billy Gordon was seated across her glass-topped desk.

Now, Madame Ravenal had known Billy Gordon since he had been first introduced to long trousers; and for years she had been furnishing his mother with all Mrs. Gordon's important clothes, for Madame Ravenal had a sure instinct for what would become the mellowing fifty years of Billy's handsome mother. Furthermore, through some wireless system of her own, Madame Ravenal knew all the existing news and potential news of her world-although, unlike the newspapers, it was her policy never to

publish her exclusive information.
"Billy," she began with her "Billy," she began with her wonted brusqueness, "last night I saw the try-out of a new show at a dog-town, Stamford, out in the wilds of Connecticut, thirty-five miles away. It was called 'Rose Time.' It was certainly one of the worst shows I have ever seen. And perhaps, of its kind, it was one of the best shows I have ever seen."

"Yes?" queried Billy politely. He had been given no hint of what lay behind Madame Ravenal's abrupt summons.

"And that good-bad show is coming into New York on a shoestring, and it's going to be a sure-fire flop. You never saw such cheap scenery, such cheap clothes, such legs on its chorus girls. That show, as it stands, dies the night it opens in New York!

"Yes?" repeated Billy Gordon. He still had no idea in what manner the "flopping" He still of an unknown show might concern him.

"There are several persons in the affair that we both know," continued Madame Ravenal. "I'll just name Lily Spencer and Katie O'Doon. To hell with the rest of them!" Madame Ravenal exploded with a startling vehemence. "Katie O'Doon is the one I'm thinking about! She's the damnedest worker I've ever known. And she's all heart—and she doesn't even know it! She thinks she's hard, but she's always thinking of her responsibility toward other people first, and thinking of herself last. She's crazy—Katie O'Doon's crazy; and I love her because she's crazy! And, Billy, I can't bear it to have that child kill herself in New York with a cheap flop that's not her fault! Can you, Billy?"
"No!" Billy Gordon shouted at her in

what turned out to be nothing more than a

choking whisper.
"I want Katie O'Doon to have a real chance!" Madame Ravenal shouted back at him in the same tone.

"So do I!" returned Billy Gordon. "But but what's to be done?'

"The answer is comparatively simple." Hard old Madame Rayenal had recovered and spoke with extreme practicality.
"Money and proper management are the answer. Everything else needed in from one of her rare outbursts of emotion, there. I'd take over the whole show myself, just for the sake of Katie O'Doon But with me this has been a bad season, and I simply can't pull enough money out of my business. All the same, I'd love to get my hands on that show!"

"Just what would you do?"
"I'd buy the control away from Feinham, but leave him as the nominal producing manager, I privately being the real boss. I'd keep four of the present principals—Katie O'Doon, her father, Lily Spencer and that Peter Romain she dances with—and I'd feature Katie O'Doon. All the rest of the cast I'd fire. The sets I'd chuck into an ash-can. Oh, yes, there's a goggled Jewish boy I'd keep. His name is Blum, and unless I miss my guess, he's going to be another of these Irving Berlins who got their musical start down in East Side saloons; perhaps he'll be better than Berlin. He knows his job, and I'd make most of my changes after asking his opinion. get a first-class man to design new sets. And I'd personally dress the show, and dress it better than I've ever dressed a show in my life. My only public connection with the affair would be the usual credit notice on the program about costumes by Madame The music, lyrics, libretto and all that stuff would stand just as they are.

There's my program, Billy."
"How much would it cost?" he promptly

inquired.

Around sixty thousand to bring it into New York, buying things at the inside price as I can. I'm sure Feinham never has put in as much as ten thousand."
"All right." Billy drew

"All right." Billy drew out a pocket check-book, then hesitated. "I'll go into it on the condition that my end is entirely in your name. I don't want anyone to know I'm in on this. Especially I don't want Katie O'Doon ever to know.

"I'll see that she never does." And in-deed Katie never did know—not until long, long after, when a daring act of hers out-

raged her world.

WITHIN two hours Feinham was in the first of a series of conferences with lawyers and Madame Ravenal. He came out of these conferences with all his powers limited by a most binding contract. But he was a happy man, for his name was to be upon the billboards of New York as the manager of a first-class New York production. Madame Ravenal had assured him that she had no ambition to be known to be in the show business, and his contract guaranteed him sole credit as manager in

guaranteed him sole credit as manager in all publicity that was paid for.

The ink was barely dry upon this con-tract, when part of the program outlined by Madame Ravenal to Billy Gordon began to go into effect with cataclysmic speed. Time" was taken off; all booking was can-celed; the cast was dismembered; designers were commissioned. The rebuilding pro-ceeded more slowly and with great care. The additional principals were selected, and Then a chorus that was a real chorus. once more rehearsals of "Rose Time" were begun under the direction of Morris Blum.

To Katie O'Doon the most amazing item of this amazing transformation was the fact that without her even making a hint for more money, her salary was raised to five hundred dollars a week. Her father was given an individual salary. Further, instead of the one good gown for which she had gone to Madame Ravenal, there were now being made for her a half-dozen gowns that were to be the finest costumes the Ravenal shop could turn out.

To the staff of the production there was added a clever press-agent, who had his definite orders. In the papers there began to appear little stories of a leading lady entirely unknown to New York who was to appear in "Rose Time," the new musical play—Katie O Doon, who some ten years before, when she was hardly more than twelve, had been a street singer. The little stories excited a doubting curiosity if nothing else, and Katie O'Doon was a figure of intriguing interest before she had ever publicly stepped upon a real New York stage.

Katie did not resent this use made of her humble origin; at the very start she had told Morris Blum that she did not mind when he had told her that he had built his play largely upon ideas taken from her own life. But this publicity gave a keener edge to her constant fear that her father might learn the truth. Katie might have spared herself this worry. Terry O'Doon regarded all this as just press-agent stuff; and he carefully kept to his part in their elaborate pretense of being real father and daughter.

At length, after a week of trying out in obscure towns, "Rose Time" opened on a Tuesday pight in New York at the Olympian. Madame Ravenal had not left this matter of the first audience entirely to chance and the clever press-agent. She had sent out hundreds of personal letters to her most important patrons; to many others she had telephoned. A suggestion from Madame Ravenal was not a thing to be taken lightly by these ladies; so they came, and brought their husbands. The Olympian had never before housed a more distin-guished first-night audience. Katie O'Doon, for her first appearance, could not have had a better chance-nor a chance which would test her more severely.

THE opening set of the first act was a colorful reproduction of Cherry Lane, its true ugliness eliminated or sublimated, and the colorful, frolicsome tenement-dwellers who filled the street were the members of the chorus. After they had done their bit, a slight girlish figure appeared upon a stoop at the rear, and stood wearily against the doorway rolling down her sleeves, which had been rolled up to do the wash-just as Katie O'Doon had done it on that afternoon ten years before. Some one in the chorus shouted to her for a song—not Peter Romain, for he had refused the rôle he had originally played in this same scene.

At that call for a song, the audience recognized her. She was that child they had read of, the street-singer of Cherry Lane. She indeed at this moment looked no more than twelve, despite her trained one hundred and twenty pounds, and she looked wanly appealing in her faded, homemade dress— which faded dress, by the way, had been designed by New York's most famous modiste. Something about that child washerwoman, so wan, so obviously making a brave fight against poverty, gripped at the hearts of the audience before Katie had even

opened her lips. There came another call for a song—this time from Morris Blum; and presently Morris was standing at the bottom of the stoop, his violin beneath his chin. Morris would trust this bit of precious fiddling to no one else. The tenement-dwellers crowded about the stoop; Katie stepped forward in compliance, and amid the hush she sang her burlesques of those emotional ballads, "In the Baggage Coach Ahead" and "Only a Bird in a Gilded Cage"-only now her bur-lesque had a lightness, a daintiness it had lacked in the old days, and was therefore all the more funny. Then her manner all the more funny. Then her manner changed, and with Morris playing the softest of obbligatos, she sang "The Last Rose of Summer" in her high, haunting, floating

Onward from that little scene on the



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stoop, Katie O'Doon owned her audience, and there is no need to tell much more of what happened that night. All that is part of theatrical history, and can be looked up by those interested in such matters. And there is no occasion here to outline the plot of "Rose Time." This present history is not, even in a minor degree, the history of "Rose Time;" it is the history of some dozen years in the life of Katie O'Doon, and of a few other people at points where their lives affected hers.

But there is some need to attempt a brief reminiscence of Katie O'Doon as New York saw her that night. Just as part of her job Katie had studied herself in order to discove: in what direction lay her greatest She had made her decision, effectiveness. and the decision of Morris Blum had been the same. All that was broadly humorous, all acrobatic dancing, all spectacular dancing, these were to belong to others. So on this night Katie O'Doon of Cherry Lane was all daintiness, all grace, all charm. Even in her grotesqueries which drew laughter, she drew as much admiration for her sheer grace. Not in a single movement was Katie ungraceful.

And Katie was beautiful. Of course she was helped tremendously by some of the gowns provided by the tough old mothering Madame Ravenal—ravishing gowns which made the smartest women out in front tingle with envy. There was no doubt of it: Katie O'Doon was radiantly, vitally, gorgeously beautiful!

When the final curtain fell, there was no need for that audience to wait for the morning papers to know of a surety that a new star had come to Broadway. Katie had to take calls that were seemingly endless; the audience appeared determined not to leave the theater, but all stood beside their seats, shouting and beating their hands-that is, all stood up save one.

The single exception was a young man, alone, in a seat at the very back of the alone, in a seat at the very back of the balcony, a young man who happened to cwn most of the show, and whose money had given it its present chance. But he was not thinking of this money. He was thinking of Katie O'Doon. And he did not stand, for the reason that he was too nerveless to stand. His hands were gripped between his knees; he could hardly breathe because of the choking gulps; tears ran silently down his face. He was seeing the rough, illiterate little nobody he and Lily Spencer had run down years before-and at the same time he was seeing the indomitable, gloriously beautiful young woman down below. To him she was the most precious and desirable being in the world. And he could not have her! He could never have her!

(The drama of this remarkable novel increases in power with each chapter. Ee sure to read the next installment-in our forthcoming March issue.)

ENVIRONMENT

(Continued from page 79)

left Japan. I made him accept. It was an advance, you see-all Manchuria. It hasn't been very jolly, though. Nobody has heard from the Whartons since they left Mukden five weeks ago. . . . Stanley, can't we make the consulate do something?"

In the outer office, while she spoke, some one had arrived, and Yuan now entered, looking very anxious. But Stanley, whose eyes were still on Millie, said patiently:
"Mr. Preston will dine with us, Millie; I

hope you'll see that he doesn't regret it.

With a sudden turn that reminded me of the hysteria of her entrance, she said, smiling: "He shall have our best." Then she went out.

To Yuan, whose suppressed manner she had fortunately not observed, Stanley then turned, and said: "Well?"

"There is lady, sir," the Oriental avowed unexpectedly. "She say she have come out Mongolia. Many foreigner have fled. She velly much trouble'. Ask see Mlista Flette."

The blood could hardly have left Stanley's face for his heart more abruptly. chin trembled so terribly as he tried to reply, that I myself was about to bid the clerk show the lady in, when the door through which Yuan had entered, opened.

THE woman who appeared in it would have stirred a stone. She wore Mongolian garments that were stained and torn. Her body was thin and shaken as if with a strange fever. The wasted beauty of her face was more poignant than the freshest loveliness could be. I, who am middle-aged and unyielding, would have gone to any "foreign field" for her, myself. garments that were stained and torn.

For a moment her half-delirious dark eyes wandered about the room as she stood there. Then a sudden realization came into them, and recognizing Stanley, she gave a sharp moan of uncontrolled relief and half fell toward him.

"Ellen!" he cried, catching her with agonized hands and placing her in the chair he had been occupying. "What has haphe had been occupying. "What has hap-pened? We have been trying for days to get word of you and Frank"

Her eyes closed. Her lips sought to move,

but her throat seemed too parched with the fever. Stanley, kneeling by her, ordered Yuan to bring some water.

would have slipped out incontinently just then, but was prevented by the glimpse of Millie again crossing the court toward us. For whether she had seen Yuan's movements, or whether one of the "devils" of the place prompted her, I don't know. Any-how she approached with wide, staring eyes, and lips strainedly apart.

I rose as she reached the door, but her gaze was on Stanley and the broken woman by whom he was kneeling. With neither, however, was she in the least concerned. Her eyes, burning with anticipation, went searchingly around the room and into the outer office.

Stanley saw her as Yuan returned with

the water.
"Millie," he informed her needlessly, "it Ellen. She has suffered some terrible thing.

In this she showed no interest, but looked beyond him and Ellen as might a clairvoyant searching space, and demanded:

"But where is Frank?"

From Ellen, who lay there with fluttering lids, came another moan, as well as an effort to draw herself back from the de-

lirium into which she was lapsing.
"Where is he?" Millie, standing rigid and implacable, demanded with hope and

Ellen's eyes opened; but Stanley spoke: "She must not talk yet, Millie. She must rest first. Prepare some food for her.

Millie did not move. She stood staring the question which was obsessing her with increasing terror. Outside, in the court, twi-light was beginning to creep like the shadow of a fatality.

Then Yuan brought the water, and when Ellen had drunk it, she began to speak,

despite Stanley's injunction.
"I must tell her," she said. "We left Mukden, as you know, for our new work in Mongolia. A Japanese child which we had adopted in Seoul, was with us, and two guides. We traveled ten days on horses. It was very hard. The tenth day we met foreigners, Europeans and Americans who were leaving the country. There was trouble-

She paused, coughing. Millie's hands opened and closed impa-

tiently.

"Frank wished to turn back; but I determined to go on, to trust in God. Then we began to meet bands of Mongolians who threatened us-and stole one of our

"We had to turn after that, but lost our way in avoiding the bandits. We had to dig a fell ill and died.

grave for him with our hands. "Soon we came to a river. It was wide and deep. Frank left me on the shore with the guides, to see if the river could be forded. He reached an island, near the other side, and waving to us to come on, went behind it.

"We followed. The island was not large;

but Frank was not there.

Again she coughed, but Millie's eyes were relentlessly demanding of her to go on.

"We called and looked for him. He didn't answer. We searched for three But we only found," she ended, "a bloodstained piece of his hat, farther down the stream.

"And you left him?" Millie flung at her wildly, denouncingly, and manifestly insensible to the pathetic distress of the narration. "You took him out there where he didn't want to go, and let him get killed-and left him?"

Stanley, the most lenient of men, rose to his feet.

"Millie!" he cried, with a sternness that urtled even me. "Shame! Go to startled even me. your room!"

Wide-eyed and frightened at this unaccustomed and unexpected rebuke, her gaze ent to and fro from him to Ellen, whose "Oh!" she said. "Oh!" -with

she said. -with ironic lightness. Then suddenly she turned, bird-like, with a look back over her shoulder, and left the room.

STANLEY, who no more comprehended a on his knees by Ellen. But her delirium was not to be shunted off this time. head was tossing to and fro, and she wept and muttered incoherently.

When a doctor had been sent for, we carried her gently from the office into an adjoining room—the guest-chamber—and laid her on its bed. There, as we waited, Stanley hung over her and spoke reassur-ingly, while I, who was beginning to feel imposed upon by all these emotions, dropped into a chair by a teakwood table over which hung a ghastly mirror.

I tried to inoculate myself with indifference to the whole and I flattered I should do in Peking. But I flattered I should I deror reflected Ellen's bed; and though I deliberately avoided looking into it, not five minutes passed before I was startled by seeing Ellen rise up in it like a wraith and stare trancedly before her, as at a terrible thing. Then I saw her press her hands to her heart and heard her cry importunately:

"Go to Millie! Oh, go to Millie! Quick!"
She was merely delirious. How could it
otherwise? So Stanley said to her calmly: "All right, Ellen-it's all right. Lie down again and rest."

But she was not thus to be appeased. She ontinued to plead pitifully: "Go! Go! continued to plead pitifully:

Well, to ease her—and because I wasn't sorry to get away from that mirror, which I confess had begun to give me the creeps, I said I would go.

Ellen sank back, and I went outside, where a cool breeze was whispering about the wide, dark eaves of the roof. I stood there for

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a moment telling myself that as soon as the doctor came, I would clear out for Peking.

But the charred half-moon, coming sud-denly out from under a shred of cloud, reminded me of Millie, and I decided really to go to her door in obedience to Ellen's importuning. Crossing the court, I knocked and stood waiting a response, listening meanwhile to a Chinese voice singing somewhere, in a strained minor, one of those quarter-toned songs that seem to separate East from West more completely than lan-

guage or thought or custom.

Knocking again, I became suddenly anx-Then, getting no answer, I uncere-

moniously opened the door.

What had happened was evident to me. Millie lay on the bed, her hands straight along her sides, and her face very white in the golden pool of her hair. On the table by her was a lighted candle, a small bottle, empty, and a sheet of paper. I touched her brow and then quickly bent my ear to her heart.

A pulseless body is the most awing thing on earth, and my own heart almost stopped as I looked down on her. Then my eyes fell on the sheet of paper on which were scribbled a few words. They read:

I don't care to live without Frank, Stanley. Anyhow, you love Ellen. Good-by.

Millie.

ONLY a lifelong hatred of meddlesomeness prevented me, I must admit, from tearing up that paper and concealing the bottle. Yes: for even the mental and moral entanglements such a course would have involved would hardly have restrained me.

Telling myself sternly it was Stanley's

affair, and nobody else's, I closed the door behind me and went back to the sickroom, although crossing the deathly moonlight of that temple-yard made me shudder. Stanley rose from Ellen's side as I entered. He

thought, I fancy, that I was the doctor.
I handed him the note. Then, indicating Ellen, I said: "She was right in urging us to go to Millie."

He looked at me. It was terrible to see him read the note.

"What has happened? Is she--" He searched my face.

I nodded.

For a moment he stood there, stunned; then he sank into a chair and buried his head in his hands, sobbing as only a quiet man can. You see, the force of the blow was doubled by the revelation to himself that he loved Ellen. He hadn't had any idea of that. He was of the simple, honest kind, who are inclined to suppress in themselves anything that does not belong to honesty.

Soon, however, he pulled himself together. "I'll go to Millie," he murmured. But remembering my position, he added first, with characteristic consideration:

"I hope you know, my friend, that I would not have been so indecent as to drag you into this affair, had I understood my-

Well, character, they say, is ninety per cent inherited. It may be. I'm not up in that arithmetic. But as I sat there alone in that Chinese temple waiting for the doctor, or for Stanley to come back. I would have sworn that ten per cent of Oriental environment acting on Occidentals can upset any such theory of heredity.

After the funeral I went to Peking.

I only hear from Stanley and Ellen oc-

casionally.

CONNIE MAKES THE GRADE

(Continued from page 53)

"We mustn't let that influence you. Your job is to collect arguments.'

One day the Inquiring Reporter saw Professor Lingley on the street, and the superin-tendent of the schools sounded a new note.

So I took him on for a real interview she told the editor, "and I think it's the best stuff we've had yet."

"Pro-Cleve, I take it."
"Yes, but it's a new angle. The menace of Poplar Pocket."

The educator's argument was cautious and logical, and there wasn't a single flag-wave in it. Poplar Pocket, he said, had been shut off from the world about a hundred years too long already. There were a dozen or fifteen families in it, living along the straggling mud road and eking out a precarious livelihood by cutting hay and wood, and by less legitimate means. It was almost pure American stock, and it had run to seed. Normal young people got out as quickly as possible. What remained was a stagnant pool of poverty, ignorance, degeneracy. It contributed far above its per capita share to the population of jails, poorhouses and insane asylums. It was in constant conspiracy against the compulsory education law, and he found it impossible to make the children come to school regularly. He had con-

"The hill country is full of such isolated pockets, and they are always a menace to civilization. In western Massachusetts there is such a valley, cut off from the world by a range of hills, but barely a mile from the prosperous and enlightened country along the State road. Somebody has made a careful study of the records, and that little valley has cost the State millions in poverty, disease and crime. You don't have to go to crowded cities to find slums.

"We must take the plug out of Poplar Pocket, for the protection of ourselves and the benefit of those miserable people. That beautiful little valley is a cesspool. It is as poisonous as typhoid."

THE next day Connie wandered up the footpath past the Nutley home and into Poplar Pocket. She and her friend Luke Witherspoon had been up there on a bota-HE next day Connie wandered up the nizing trip a year and more ago, and the place had an unpleasant memory for her. slatternly woman, obviously feeble-minded. had ordered them out of the woods where they were picking flowers, and shouted curses after them as they left. Today as she walked along the frozen mud road past shabby lit-tle shacks, their windows framing staring, animal-like faces, she felt that the school superintendent had said the decisive word. The Nutley place was beautiful, but it was an expensive luxury

As she walked back the footpath along the brook that day, Connie was tired of being neutral. She wanted to abolish poverty and ignorance. "I wish I could do something, instead of just running around in circles, like a kitten chasing its tail!"

At Independence Avenue she saw a man leaning against a tree and gazing at the Nutley house—Roland Stokesbury, the town's foremost architect, a young man whom she did not happen to know well, but for whom she had always felt great re-spect. It annoyed her, after her cosmic thoughts on the abolition of poverty, to find him in an attitude of reverence toward the troublesome old house.

"Out doing a little worshiping, Mr. Stokesbury?" she asked.

"Oh, how d'you do? I mean to say, it's perfectly corking, Miss Lambert."

He stuck out his thumb and made some lines in the air in a way that artistic people think expresses thought.

"I've got to find out what this bird is talking about," thought Connie, "and gosh, how I dread it!"

"Just why is it so perfectly corking?" she ked. "I work for the Sentinel, you know, and if there's anything that ought to be

"I mean—" For a person who was so anxious to tell what he meant, Stokesbury had very little luck. He issued a series of raptures about lines and proportions, but he did say some fairly definite things about fanlights, small-paned windows, hand-hewn clapboard shingles and lovely hooded doorways. "Pure American Colonial—none of these imitation Greek temples and that sort of rot. It was the finest contribution the old boys made to American life, and this is a perfect example. It must be preserved at

"They say it's plugging up the entrance to the valley," Connie observed. That feature didn't interest him at all.

"I mean to say-there's something gra-cious about it."

"Of course, it's very old," Connie prompted.

His answer was a surprise.

"Oh, age—that's nothing. I mean these houses on both sides are just as old, but I mean these they don't amount to anything. As a matter of fact, they ought to be torn down to give this a better setting. If we were civil-ized people, we'd do that."

Connie tried him again with:
"Then there's that historical element—the old party who wrote hymns."

"Come around this way. D'you notice that curving roof-line reaching back almost to the ground? That's the perfect salt-box, isn't it?"

"I don't quite get that." "You know the salt-box house, don't you? It was patterned after the salt-box they used to have in the kitchen—you see, one short roof line and one long one.'

"It sort of crouched down out of the wind,

I suppose.

"Yes, but it's funny how the fashion started—back in the reign of Queen Anne. It seems the queen was hard up, and she laid a tax on all two-story houses in the colonies. So they invented this story-and-ahalf effect and evaded the tax."

"And Mr. Holcombe talks about this ma-

terialistic age," Connie laughed.
"Probably this was a simple salt-box house to begin with, but the rest fits in without a jarring note. It's a perfect whole the kind of thing that happens only once in a lifetime. Architects come from all over to study that house. I even get a little reflected light from it myself.

"When I see how all those odds and ends of additions have been stuck on at various times, and how the whole thing blends together, I believe in miracles. It is the only thoroughly charming thing in town," Stokesbury suddenly became self-conscious and made a funny little bow,—"present company excepted."

ONNIE acknowledged receipt of this with a grin. She felt herself catching something of his ardent enthusiasm.

"Couldn't we go down to your office and write a little piece about the beauty of this house. It might have an effect upon the councilmen."

"Beauty—councilmen, I don't seem to get the connection," Stokesbury laughed. "All right, let's go."
"This," thought Connie, as she tried to

swing in with his long-legged stride, gonta be good!"

"What do you think about this question, Miss Lambert?"

"Me? I'm not supposed to think. work on a newspaper.

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"What do you think when you have a day off?

"I think it's fine." But Stokesbury would not be evaded. "Of course, antiquity doesn't r-ring any bells with me," she said. "I'm more interested in the future than in the past. And I'm quite mad about the present."

"Young people are apt to be. But don't

"I'm not allowed to argue with the customers, sir. But if you'll give me an ear-ful of architecture, I'll try to express your idea. What could be fairer than that?"

Connie plunged into the job with the same joyful appetite with which she tackled golf, dancing, office work and beefsteak. Stokesbury's love of his art stimulated her love of own, and she set herself the task of "selling" this architectural gem to Branch-ville. "Got to give him the best I have in ville. the house." And Stokesbury said it was

"It's awful, the way I wabble," she said in parting. "Here I am, all het up about saving the dear old homestead. I ought to have a sign on me like a time-table: 'Subject to

change without notice."

"I'll be glad when this has blown over," said the architect wistfully. "I mean to say, there are lots of nice people in this town I'd like to be friends with again. I'm going against my own business interests, anyway."
"I never thought of that."

The skipper of the Sentinel spilled pipeashes all over his vest in token of his appreciation.

"You've certainly delivered the goods, Connie. This is bully. Now, tomorrow I want you to go and talk to Miss Nutley. I've been saving her up."

THE interior of the old house proved to be as thoroughly charming as its architecture, a matter of dignified and graceful lines and beautiful furnishings. What Connie didn't know about old furniture would have filled, she admitted, "an entire issue of the Sentinel with uninteresting reading matter," but Hannah Nutley touched every piece with a loving hand. In the historic study before the open fire, in the midst of her fine old furniture and books, the faded spinster talked with reverence of the old home and its traditions.

"I suppose after a family has been living in a house for a couple of centuries, it begins to get used to it," said Connie, but Miss Nutley did not smile. There were no lighter notes in her song of praise.

To Connie she was a wistful, pathetic figure, living entirely in the past. In her lovely and immaculate house, with its rare and valuable furniture, Hannah Nutley was a little shabby. Her clothes gave telltale signs of poverty; her hands were rough from hard work; there was no servant. Connie had a suspicion that old Miss Nutley never had quite enough to eat. "She's working for her ancestors," Connie reflected, "and it's a bum job."

"Things are not always easy, Constance," the old lady admitted, "but I am happy with my memories and my books. I don't like to stand in the way of the needs of the town, but I am the last of the family. I

should think they might let things rest-as long as I am here.

The girl had a lump in her throat as she jotted down her notes, and she resolved to do her best for Hannah Nutley.

"And yet," she thought as she left the house and swung on down toward the highschool building, "she'd really be happier in a nice, sunny, comfortable three-room apartment with her books and her canary three square meals a day. Duty is what's the trouble with her."

There was a book, she remembered, in the high-school library dealing with local his-The inadequate little library, stuck away in a corner of the basement, was the only one in town, and it was not open to the public except a couple of hours on Saturday; so Connie had to go to Miss Plash, the high-school principal, to borrow the book.

"I can't let it go out, Constance," said her former teacher; "it's much too valu-

Books, apparently, were something to be preserved from curious eyes.

"May I have the key, then? I'll get what I need out of it. I'm writing an ar-ticle for the paper about the old Nutley

Miss Plash granted the request with im-

plied conditions.
"I hope you will treat the matter with reverence, Constance. I am not talking for publication, since the superintendent has already spoken on the subject; but I hope there is still some appreciation among the young for the fine old things."

Connie agreed to deal gently with history but the encounter brought back all her old antipathy toward her former teacher.

"How old Plash does take the joy out of Old Plash and old Holcombe-there's a fine pair to draw to." On the other hand, there was that nice Stokesbury person, and poor old Hannah. "Still, Cleve-and Professor Lingley's sound talk-Dad's business-better homes for people like Sally. I'm a mental wreck; I'm leaking at every seam." On her way back to the office she comforted herself with the dictum: "I'm a war correspondent; it's not my business to fight."

The afternoon was crowded with petty details, and the little office was shadowy and silent when Connie gathered her notes together and sat down under her green-shaded light to write the story of Hannah Nutley. Over in the far corner the editor sat in his own electric puddle, and there was no talk between them. She faced the decrepit machine, and her random thoughts ran in this

"Bet this is the very typewriter old Patience used.... No, bad note-off on the wrong foot.... I've got to get the the wrong foot. . . I've got to get the ache into this: Last of the Nutleys—fall of the house of Nutley. . . . I can't say the old lady is poor, but lots of people must know. . . . Extra kick in it for must know. . . . Extra kick in it for them. . . . The man's got a home—why doesn't he go to it?"

"You aren't waiting for me, are you, Mr. Beckwith? I'll be some time on this," she called across the dusky room.

"I might go to supper," the boss replied. "If you're through before I come back, just lock up."

IT went better after his departure. There were several false starts, and the floor was littered with balls of crumpled paper, but presently the story began to form under her fingers-a story that began and ended in the room where ancient Jonathan Nutley had dreamed his dreams of beauty in the wilderness, where Patience had written hymns that the world loved, and where now in the glow of firelight over the velvety surfaces of old mahogany, Hannah sat keeping her lonely vigil and asking only that she be

Burnet Dana

He who wrote that lively tale, "The Shoe Tree," has written another story for you that is even better. It will be published in an early issue of The Red Book Magazine and is entitled

"THE UNATTRACTIVE DAUGHTER

allowed to go to the end of the long, long

The pathos of that woman's life clutched at Connie's throat again. The girl was tired from conflicting emotions, and though she did not know it, hungry. The mop of hair went down on her arm over the machine, and for the first time in years she abandoned herself to tears. Beckwith, entering quietly, found her thus.

"Doesn't it come out right?" he asked "Never mind-let it go till tomor-

Connie smiled from shiny eyes.

"It isn't that. I've just been r-reading my favorite author.

The editor took her copy, and Connie got ready to go home. Ordinarily this meant a quick dive into a coat and hat, but tonight she carefully removed the stains of tears and journalism, civilized her barbarous hair and powdered her inquiring nose with great generosity-all the while elaborately pretending that she was not waiting for the boss to read her piece. But at last came the summons to the editorial desk.
"Sorry for you, Connie." Her heart sank.

"This puts the kibosh on your friend Cleve.

"But the story's all r-right—you think?"
"It's a knockout! Tomorrow night at this time every councilman in Branchville will be crying into his soup."
"Can you beat that? I start out as a

little merry sunshine, and I end up as a sob

"That's because you've got the gift of catching moods. You've done three differ-ent kinds of story this week, and done them all well. I'm going to take one more chance on you—old Horace Townsend."

"But Mr. Townsend has gone down to New York for the winter—I wrote the item

"I know, but he's worth going after. He's a queer old codger, and barely able to read and write, but he's the biggest taxpayer in this county, and people respect his opinions. He takes the paper, and he's probably well posted on the scrap. He wouldn't answer a letter, but I think he'd talk to you."

"All right, I'll be glad to go. I can't be

any more unpopular with my gang than I

am now.

"I've been taking an awful pounding, my self, Connie. Speak to the folks tonight. If it's all right with them, suppose you take the day in the office and run down on the night train. It will give you a little change, anyhow.

'More work for the undertaker?" "I don't know how he feels about it, but I know you will report him honestly.

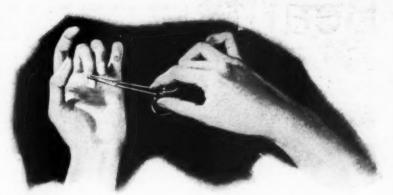
N EXT day Connie put things in shape in preparation for her short absence.

"Don't forget to dig up some of those forty-years-ago's," said Beckwith. "The last on the standing galleys go in today.

This year the Sentinel was reprinting news-events of forty years back—a feature greatly enjoyed by the older generation. The paper was a weekly in those ancient days, so one issue had to supply fodder for a week. Presently she got out the yellow old file and set to copying the interesting

"Why, here's one about old Townsendhow perfectly splendiculous! Wont do to reprint, though." Secretively-for she was not supposed to mutilate the files—she clipped the little item and stowed away the slip of paper in her purse. "Private stock!"

On the midnight train to the city, Connie, unaccustomed to Pullmans, found it hard to get to sleep. The last few days' events, the visit to the school library, the architect's fine tribute to the house, poor old Hannah Nutley, the imminent Horace Townsend, marched across her mind to the rhythm of the train, like a stage army of four-library, Townsend, Stokesbury.



Why you cannot cut the cuticle without actually injuring it

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drowsiness the soldiers in her mental parade began going backward, as in a reversed movie film, Stokesbury, Townsend, Nutley, library. . . . Suddenly she was broad awake.

"Why-why, it's a perfect whale of an

Now she had a night's job of thinking to

do—so she promptly went to sleep.

The perfect whale of an idea went with her into Horace Townsend's office at ten the next morning, but she kept the monster sub-merged for a while.

"First I wish you'd read this piece in last night's paper, Mr. Townsend. It probably

hasn't reached you yet."

S HE walked to the window and gazed out over the skyscrapers to the sparkling harbor while the old man read the interview Horace Townsend was known in Branchville as "the wire-screen king;" he had attained to an enviable position in his industry and was reputed to be a millionaire. One of his factories—devoted to the manufacture of wooden frames-was Branchville's largest industry. The screen-weaving factory was in a New York suburb. The old man was a New York suburb. The old man was back and forth frequently, but he spent the summer in the country and the winter in New York. He was rich enough to enjoy the luxury of carelessness in speech and He resisted all efforts of his family to make him talk like a civilized being, and his clothes always looked as if he had slept

"Well, well, what about it, young woman?" he asked testily. "Expect me to get teary about old Patience Nutley and her I never was much on hymns. I don't owe nothin' to the Nutley family. "Statute of limitations-is that what the

lawyers call it?'

"Lookee here! Has some old coot been talkin' about my private affairs?"
"Only this old coot—the Sentinel of forty

years ago. I ran across it yesterday." The old man's ashy face showed a faint flush as he read the faded yellow clipping

which Connie laid before him.
"Mr. and Mrs. Hezekiah Nutley announce

that the engagement between their daughter Hannah and Mr. Horace Townsend has been broken by mutual consent."

Connie could hear the big watch ticking in his pocket. She wondered nonsensically whether it had been doing that for forty

"Patience Nutley's hymns done that. Hannah's great-aunt she was—a maiden lady. She was still livin' then, and her word was law in that house. I wasn't religious enough to suit them folks—they talked 'sif I was a heathen. They hammered on Hannah till they broke her down. So," he concluded, "I don't worship the Nutley place none. Same time, if Hannah does, why don't they leave her be?

"Tve got a better idea—see what you think." Connie borrowed a sheet of paper and drew two parallel lines, which wabbled "Here is Independfrom her nervousness. ence Avenue; here's the ridge back of it-the gap, the Nutley place." Her pencil rested upon the square representing the troublesome old house. She could sense the old man's concentration. "You buy that house—move it straight back through that begap to there." She drew a new square. "The Patience Nutley Memorial Library—Miss Hannah Nutley, custodian and librarium Memorial Company of the Patience Nutley Response Memorial Library—Miss Hannah Nutley, custodian and librarium Memorial Company of the Patience Nutley (1997). rian-Mr. Horace Townsend, donor!'

Having delivered her bombshell with such bravado, she had a panicky desire to crawl under the table.

The old man stiffened and looked sharply

"Did Hannah Nutley suggest that?" "Miss Nutley doesn't dream of it—no-ody does. I thought of it on the train body does. I thought of it on the train last night. But I bet she'd jump at it. She loves the old house; she loves books.". Connie dropped her voice as if Branchville were listening at the keyhole. "I suspect she's very poor. This would take care of

her, happily, for the rest of her life."

In the ghastly silence Connie nervously built houses with her pencil all over Poplar Pocket. She carefully labeled the new short street, "Townsend Place." "That beautiful old house,"-she was thinking aloud now,-'at the end of a street, with lots of room to show it off. The town needs a library terribly. Everybody would be happy—Miss Nutley, Cleve Pickett, architects, r-religious people, heathens—and you."
"Me? I've hated that ol' Patience Nut-

ley f'r forty years, and here you come pes-terin' me to build a thingamajig to her

This was the cue that Connie had Leen

waiting for.

"Old Patience doesn't mean anything in my young life. Isn't it about time that she took her hand off our affairs and let people be happy? This"—she pointed at the improvised map—"will do the trick."

Horace put a bony forefinger on the clip-

"So you kinda figgered on sellin' me this here scrap of paper?

That's the idea. "How much'll it cost me?"

Connie sized up the old man while her pencil built a fine new schoolhouse and gencrously presented it to the town. He had a reputation for great frugality. The men-tion of a large sum of money would scare him stiff. Or would it? Then she said an astonishing thing:

"I can't tell you. All I know is that it will be the biggest r-roll that anybody ever

spent on Branchville!" Townsend glared at her.

"What do you expect to get out of this, young lady?"

"A piece for my paper. You must come up and talk it over with everybody. If you're going to catch the one o'clock train with me, we'd better leave pretty soon, so you'll have time to buy me a big lunch." "I'm sixty-five years old," Mr. Townsend

grumbled, "but you're the most expensive young woman I ever met." "Except Hannah," said Connie joyously,

"Except Hannah," said Connie joyousty, but what she thought was: "He has delivered himself into my hands."
Old Horace made it clear on the journey to Branchville that he was not committing himself to anything, that he was merely making inquiries. He would see Miss Nuther this evaning and if the appropriet of the ley this evening, and if she approved of the idea, they would take up the matter of the

"I'll be at the Sentinel," Connie told him as they parted at the station. "The minute you say the word, I'll have Cleve and Mr. Stokesbury meet us there, and Mr. Beck-with, and we'll talk it all over. We ought We ought

to get everything settled before bedtime."
"What's the matter with my own office in the fact'ry?

"No-this is the Sentinel plan. We better go to headquarters.

She bent her head against the raw wind and hurried off in the stormy twilight to tell the editor what had come into his troubled life.

THE historic meeting in the newspaper office from nine to ten ran so smoothly that it was almost without dramatic value. Miss Nutley had agreed joyously to the new Miss Nutley had agreed joyously to the new plan, provided she could make an outright gift of the house. This made her a partner, not a beneficiary. Stokesbury said it was practical to move the house, though it would undoubtedly be expensive. To make it more expensive, his mind played with a parklike treatment of the new Townsend Place, with a waterway down the center and straight rows of populars. and straight rows of poplars.

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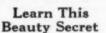
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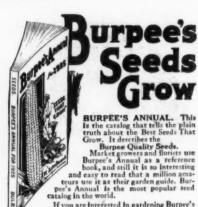
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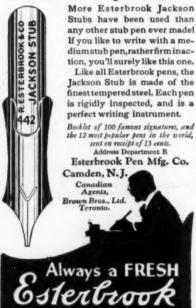
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"I mean to say, we must have a vista." "The city must help on that," said Mr. Reckwith.

"And there'll be no cost for the lot," said "That's a gift too."

"Will your people agree to that?" asked Townsend. "If they don't, I'll get new people. I can do anything, now.

"If you have any trouble, let me know," said Townsend. "I'll help—as long's I don't make any money on the deal."

"Did you hear what I heard?" Cleve asked the world.

"That's all right, young feller," said old "I aint no real-estater. Horace.

"They're trying to cheat you out of your rights, Mr. Townsend," said Connie. "Don't you worry. You've no idea how much the books will cost you."

At ten the important gathering broke up. "Going home, Connie?" asked Cleve.
"Not just yet. I've got a little work to do." "Tomorrow night? I've got to take back some things I said."

"Yes, I think you better."
The door shut them out into the windy night, and the editor was alone with his staff.

Throughout the evening Connie had been puzzled about Mr. Beckwith; he had been the usual kind, interested employer, but he had not seemed enthusiastic. It was the big moment in Connie's short life, and while she did not expect old Becky to turn flip-"Hail the Conquering Hero flops and sing, Comes," he needn't have been quite such a bump on a log. Had she gone too far, to please him? Was Mr. Beckwith, after all, one of those little men who could not bear to see a subordinate grab the spotlight? Before she went home, she simply had to know where she stood.

"Is this all r-right, Mr. Beckwith?" She had followed him back to his desk. "Do you think this is a good plan?"

HE editor's first words were not reassuring.

"You gave me to understand that you had taken that old tightwad-a man who never read a book in his life except a bankbook-and made him endow a library in memory of a woman he has hated for forty years. Did that sound reasonable to a skep-tical newspaper man? I expected the old boy to step in here any minute and pi the

"Well, I don't quite believe the thing yet; but I don't see how he can get out of it. So,"-there was that queer, swelling lump on the editor's forehead which always appeared in moments of excitement,—"so this is the high spot in the history of the paper, and the most important thing that has happened in Branchville since—since— "The Glacial Period."

"It's a compromise that must please everybody-old fossils like me and young reprobates like you, hymn-singers, real-estate men, educators—everybody. And the Sential will get the glory." Beckwith was will get the glory. Beckwith was rumbling now like a volcano close to erup-"All right, Connie, you've done your big job. Go home and get some rest. I'll write this story, tonight, as I used to write

'em, back at the case."
"R-reverting to type," said the irrepressible girl.

"I'll set it and I'll make it up, and I'll throw in all the kinds of type there are; it will be the yellowest front page we ever put out. In the morning, when the boys come, we'll throw together some boiler-plate stuff and standing ads for the inside pages. The Evening Sentinel is about to commit an extra. We ought to be on the street by nine o'clock in the morning. Now run along: I got to work."

"Oh, you wouldn't put me out just when it's beginning to get interesting, would you? That's no way to treat a nice girl!" Connie had an overwhelming desire to prolong this high adventure. to extract from it the last drop of excitement. "Please let me stay and see it through. I wouldn't sleep a wink, anyhow. I'll fetch and carry and be ter-

ribly helpful."
"What would your folks say?"
Connie adopted her machine-gun style of

"They'll O. K. me in the morning. I al-ways do it first and tell 'em afterward. I've got a pull with those people. They wont WOTTV tonight, because they don't even know I'm back from New York. I didn't want to tell 'em until I was sure of every-thing. Now I'll just run over to the Night and get a pail of coffee and some Owl sandwiches.

"It's all wrong, Connie. Course, you're almost as old as my granddaughter out in California." In his tactful way Beckwith was pointing out that he was a genuine an-"Here's chow money; get plenty

"Funny how the old boys fall for my line of goods," thought Connie as she went to the restaurant. "But I better not tell him we're having a snow-storm. He'd send me home after all.

O one who has not tasted printer's ink, this might seem to be an old man and a girl working late in the composing room of a one-horse newspaper office. To Connie it was a festival and a symphony. For months afterward, it remained a vivid and happy memory-odors of coffee and ink and soft-coal smoke, little islands of light in a sea of gloom, sounds of clicking type and sharp orders and rattling windows, old Beckwith, his green eyeshade at a drunken angle, working feverishly at his case, with a queer little meaningless jerk of the type in the air between case and stick. Connie, in a faded blue apron which she kept on hand for dirty work, rummaged for dusty old cuts, put coal in the round-bellied stove, served a midnight supper on the stone table. She learned to tie strings around masses of wet type, to run the ink roller and pull proofs; she grew inkier and grimier and happier as the hours raced on; she kept her and ears open and her mouth The chief was doing an incredible job, and it was no time for mirth and laughter.

In the glamour of that night it seemed to her that the old man was taking the meager facilities of the little shop and composing a masterpiece. Slowly at first, then with increased momentum, the iron frame on the stone was filling with its leaden words; the wonderful page was growing under her enamored eyes. When the tardy November dawn began to whiten the snow-plastered windows, the big wooden letters of the headlines were going into the form—a streamer head clear across the seven columns, the first time the conservative Sen-tinel had emitted such a typographical scream since the Armistice. In the subhead there appeared the name of Constance Lambert, a shrinking violet in fourteen-point bold Italic caps!

Now the chase was full, and they took a proof of the page, all complete with its line cut of the Nutley house and its smudgy little picture of the wire-screen king-looking, Connie insisted, "like a brother of Booker T. Washington."

Old Beckwith made a dozen fussy correc-

At last he ran a loving hand over tions. the night's work and called it good.

"There, partner, is a real job. Now, old Gutenberg up there-wherever good printers go when they die-can be proud that he invented type.

Ceremonially he turned the key that wedged in the type.
"I never could have done it without you.

How would you feel about a little break-fast?"

But with the locking of the form, Connie felt a sudden let-down. The big story was at a full stop-finis-"30"-there wasn't any more.

"No, thank you. Something tells me that I need one of my mother's breakfasts. And I've got to tell Dad about the new prospects in the fire-insurance line.

"This is your day off, Connie. I've had all of your society I'm entitled to."

"All right, thank you. I could do with a little sleep." She shook hands solemnly with her boss. "Wonderful time—thank with her boss. "Wonderful time—thank you." The perfect guest making her farewell address.

Later it occurred to his tired old mind that she had amazingly thanked him for letting her work all night, but all he had said was:

"I hate to make personal remarks, but the pokiest nose in Branchville has an awful smudge on it."

"I'll take it home," said Connie, "and give the folks a treat."

Thus the great adventure faded into the light of common day.

But the cloud of glory trailed along with her as she trudged homeward through the snowy morning, her staccato thoughts in rhythm with the swing of her arm.
"Branchville the Beautiful.... Not so . Not so bad. . . . Anyway, it's got the makings. . . . Cleve will be around tonight. Cleve sounded suspicious. . . . Be wanting an option on me next. . . . No options. . . . Roll my own. . . . Roland Stokesbury wants to come too—talk over his plans. . . . Old Horace must see me before he goes back. . . . Important party

—Constance Lambert . . . Fourteen-point bold Italic caps. House all clogged up with important people. . . Salon—like those great old Frenchwomen. Power behind thrones—that's me. . . . Influence—fifteen dollars a week. . . . Well, h ready. This is gonta be good."

She burst into the house and almost fell

"Well, look who's here!" he gasped.

"You've got"—she said it with kisses—
"the sleepiest and dirtiest and smartest daughter in Branchville."

WHEN THE PETERS' CAME TO TOWN

(Continued from page 30)

before lunch," he said finally. "There go the noon whistles." It was really the Lacka-"There go wanna ferry whistling for the curve, but it pleased Mr. Peters to think that it was noon. As a matter of fact, it was a quarter past

"Well, let's be going," he said.
"Where?" asked Mrs. Peters.

"To lunch," he replied. "Then you can get that edging."

So they locked the door and plowed softly through the carpets to the elevators. There were two men waiting there to go down.
Mr. and Mrs. Peters joined the group.
"Did you ring?" Mr. Peters asked one of

the men.

"Yes," was the answer.

SO Mr. Peters rang too. If there had been seventy people waiting to go down, all of whom had probably pushed the button, Mr. Peters would have pushed the but-There is something in all of us ton too. that makes us distrust the foresight of other people waiting for elevators. You never can They might not have thought of ringing. Better be sure and do it yourself. you want a thing done, you must do it yourself," is the way Mr. Peters' father used to put it, and Mr. Peters' father was pretty nearly always right.

Way over at the left, a red light flashed. The group moved rapidly to the left. The light went out, and a rushing draft indicated that the car had passed. Way over at the right, another red light flashed. Over to the right, everybody! But the light went down, and they were left standing.

"Do you know any good card-games?"

one of the men asked.

"Yes, but the lights don't stay on long enough to play by," said his friend. They laughed, and looked at Mr. Peters. He was fumbling in his overcoat pocket. Then he

pushed the down-button grimly.

The next time, the light appeared in the center, and simultaneously another flashed at the left. Mr. and Mrs. Peters elected to defend the left goal, while the two men rushed to the center. The center car stopped, took on the two men and shut the door in the eager faces of Mr. and Mrs. Peters.

"I'm not very hungry," said Mrs. Peters. "Let's go back to the room and lie down."

"You go back," said her husband, "and I'll be right in. I have to see a man. It wont take me a minute."

It was just as they had left it, except that the man on the roof opposite was a little older. He had torn his kite and was sitting down by a chimney-pot, crying softly to himself. Mrs. Peters wondered if he was married.

The door opened softly, and her husband entered.

"I think I'll send my suit down and have it pressed again," he said. order breakfast." "Then we can

"Let's decide what we are going to see in New York first," suggested Mrs. Peters. 'Maybe the evening papers have a better list of what's going on. Things don't begin to get started here much before evening, I guess, from all I hear."

"I don't suppose that Grant's Tomb is open at night."

"I don't see why it shouldn't be. What's six o'clock to General Grant, now?" 'What indeed?" said Mr. Peters good-

naturedly.

There was a ring at the telephone. "Perhaps it's Room Service," said Mrs.

But it wasn't. It was the Office. "Is this Mr. Walter Peters?" asked the clerk. "Yes," said Mr. Peters, for he was just a plain, blunt man at heart.

"Mr. Péters, we are very sorry, but it has come to our attention that you have already today killed three of our employees. Is that correct?"

"I hope so," said Mr. Peters. "I did my best. No man could do more."

"We run a very respectable hotel here, Mr. Peters, and don't like to have this sort of thing going on. I'm afraid that we shall have to ask you to leave."

"We are going out, anyway," said Mr. "Do you happen to have any suggestions as to what to see in New York? We are from out-of-town, ourselves.

"There is always Grant's Tomb," suggested the clerk.

"Do you know if it is open in the afternoon?

"I think it is," said the clerk. "Tust a minute." And Mr. Peters could hear him turn to some one else at the desk and ask if Grant's Tomb was open afternoons.
"Hello! Mr. Peters.' Yes, Mr. Peters, you can get in up there at any time before five o'clock. I think you'll find it very enteresting."

"Thank you," said Mr. Peters, and hung b. "Come on, Edith. Pack the bag—we'll up. So Mrs. Peters went back to the room. get out. We can just make it if we hurry."



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truth always arrests our attention.

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Throughout the world human beings are beginning to realize the world by roaming over it everywhere. All through life we feel a craving to wander out into historic and romantic regions where life is different from our small part of life. We are curious; we long to meet strange peoples in remote countries. That is a natural, a virile and a wholesome craving. It is nature's incentive in man to realize life individually and intimately—not wholly through books, the world's commerce, the arts and sciences and our own little front yard.

Many of us envy The Beloved Vagabond, to whom a poet sang:

"With naught to bind your heartstrings and all the world in fee, You went where all the roads lead, beyond the farthest sea.

Then leave a PATRIN for mine eyes that I may follow, too, Some day when all the world grows dim, and I shall beckon you; Across the distant moorland, from beacon furze piled high, May I, the newest rover, see your fire against the sky!"

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THE LADY WHO PLAYED FIDELE

(Continued from page 35)

Days passed, and nights, and weeks and years! He kept himself alive by force of will-power alone, watching greedily for her youth to fade, her beauty to wither, and her spirit to break. Unprotestingly she bore her chains. No effort to escape, no thought but to endure! And yet somehow she managed to preserve herself, to achieve, as it were, a spirit of suspended animation. Life for her had no measure of time since that night of nights. No measure? Alas!

The music faltered and was hushed. For the first time the spellbound listener in the shadows was conscious of a voice, a woman's voice, low and trembling. "Twenty years, mon enfant! Twenty years before death broke the chains and set her free. And for what purpose, now that eternity had come and gone? Friends she had none, and of the money that was left her, she touched not a sou! Needlework and memories! The far corners of the world, and then the irresistible call of the scenes of childhood. Alas, cold ashes where once the flame burned so brightly! And finally night, the abandoned maison of mon père, a piano as out of tune as I, and a M'sieur Keed who asks the meaning of 'Toujours Fidèle'!

There was a long silence. The youth in the armchair did not move. Mam'selle Sport remained in the shadows. Her head was buried in her outstretched arms, and he knew that she was crying.

somewhere a bell jangled, followed by an insistent banging on the front door. The Information Kid glanced at his watch, and saw that it was the hour he had told the saw that it was the hour he had and taxi-driver to return. He hesitated, and then moved quietly toward the hall. hostess rose and followed quickly, drying her eyes and struggling for composure. They

"And now?" faltered the little woman, holding out her hand. "Shall it be—"

He smiled at her with boyish charm. "Swellest dinner I've had in years, Mam'selle. But oh, lady, that cognac was strong! My mind's a blank." He reached for the My mind's a blank." He reached for the entrance handle and then turned to look into her eyes. "Don't forget," he reminded, "you're to be at the bank tomorrow at ten. Good night, Mam'selle Sport!"

The door closed behind him.

I N all his picturesque existence, the young king of the hustlers had never before been so deeply moved. He had the artless heart of a child, a poet's passionate love for color, and yet his mind had been sharpened on the whetstone of the sporting world Destiny had forced his steps into strange paths, along precipitous brinks where the River of Life ran swiftest. He was wise beyond his years, yet still guileless: a youthful, smiling gypsy lured ever onward by the turning road. But never before had he encountered an evening quite like this.

The Information Kid closed his eyes and leaned back on the cushions. The spell of soft music was still strong upon him. His brain throbbed with the effort to concen-But for once his extraordinary talent failed him. A memory that was the marvel of all who knew him was now a closed door on which he knocked in vain.

"And yet," he murmured, rumpling his brown locks, "somewhere, somehow, I know I've seen her!"

He could not bring himself to face the banter of those of his kind who, he knew, would be waiting for him in the crowded lobby of the hotel. Scoffers! Unbelievers! Outcasts of society, and yet his pals! Alighting on Canal Street, he aimlessly



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shouldered into a throng of merrymakers, drifted out again, and wandered for an hour, scarcely conscious of where he was or what he was doing. He had only a vague memory of dark stairs, smoke-filled gambling-rooms, dealers who recognized him with a nod, and of a pile of silver and currency that grew ever larger as he dully "let it ride!" He had the luck of a drunken man; and as every gambler knows, that is beyond all comprehension.

Long after midnight, still silent, troubled and pale of face, he entered his hotel room.

Henry the Rat was parked in the double bed; Chicken Cassidy lay sprawled on the floor; and Long Shot McGovern had contrived to make a couch out of the bathtub. They were wide-awake in an instant, flinging queries at him, impatient questions to which he paid no heed. Henry was the first to discover that his silent lord of life had a roll of bills in every pocket. He disgorged currency in a steady stream. In language of the turf, it was "raining violets!

"Sufferin' cats!" gasped Henry. "Didn't you leave the lady anythin?? Did you knock her on the head? Do we have to leave town? Huh? What?"

The Kid briefly explained the source

of his wealth. It proved to be not so much, after all. But about the Lady who had played Fidèle, he was strangely mute, meeting their inquiries with averted face and dreamy eyes. Henry was terrified. Strange little offspring of iniquity, he adored the Kid with a blind fervor that recognized no other god. He lived in constant fear that something might come between them. Long after the light had been extinguished, the Kid was aware of a voice whispering in his ear:

"What's happened, pal? I can't sleep.
This dame! You aint hard hit, are you?
It aint come at last, has it? Kid, you aint gonna leave me? Tell me, pal—tell me

bout her."

His companion stirred restlessly. "She's a thoroughbred, Henry—the royal purple. Faced the barrier only once, and the Starter messed things up. She waited days and nights, and weeks and months, and-

"That'll do," said Henry. "Don't try to stall on me. Point is, are you gonna play her? Are you gonna scratch me off your

program?

The Information Kid was silent a moment. Then he reached out a hand in the darkness and patted his colleague's shoulder. "Go to sleep," he comforted. 'What I was trying to tell you was: Mam'selle Sport was married over twenty years ago, and she still-"

"Twenty years ago!" said Henry. "Married twenty—oh, hell! Well, good night, Kid." And in another minute he was snor-

ing peacefully.

A ND now a strange thing happened. The little Lady who had played Fidèle became, indeed, "Mam'selle Sport." The youth came, indeed, "Mam'selle Sport." with the gray eyes had accidentally touched the one chord to which she might respond. Under the mask of a fanciful pseudonym, she chose to play the rôle of fairy godmother in the strange realm where her jeune ami was king. With him, she visited Henri's Petit Place on Iberville Street, and the Chat Noir, and Canary Grove, the rendezvous for young adventurers. Every man was a story, every woman a play, including the vieux entertainers who had clowned in the four corners of the world, seen it all, and laughingly introduced themselves as "lost causes." But it was the younger ones she loved and who learned to love her: Elsie Lorraine, tiny, wistful-eyed sister of a jockey; Goldie Montgomery, the "Whistling Rose;" and "Florida Red," with a millionaire's diamonds sparkling at her young

"Mes enfants," she called them-laughed at their witticisms, wept over their stories, and had a comforting word for each. She was starved for youth and life and laughter. and in this way alone could she have been led to taste it. Her benefactions were numerous, but so slyly undertaken, that none but the recipients-not even the Information Kid—were aware of the giver.
"Tiens!" she told them. "It is nothing!

Some evening, perhaps, I shall give a party, and you will all come. Yes?"

In picturesque language they assured her that none would fail. Laughing like a child, she patted their cheeks.

The Information Kid, watching her with shrewd, adoring eyes, was the first to be aware of a false note in the apparent harmony. Mam'selle Sport was tiring rapidly. The illusion had faded. The novelty was gone. Worse than that, the ones whom the Information Kid had so carefully sewhom lected were being reinforced by those of a different caliber. The sporting world, after all, has its unpleasant side.

The Information Kid had wandered into a maze from which he could not extricate himself. It remained for Mam'selle Sport to live up to her name in a way that won his further respect and touched his heart still deeper.

"M'sieur Keed," she told him, "I am about to ask my first favor."

"Anything, lady," he answered.
"The Carnival approaches, and here in this house, on the last night, I would give a party—a bal masqué. Comprenes vous, mon ami? The last night! And it is for you to say who shall be there. M'sieur Keed will arrange this for the Lady Who Played

He understood that this would be her way of ringing down the curtain, of relinquishing the rôle of Mam'selle Sport. And she had chosen the very night of nights, when long ago, the fairy shoe went astray

The young king of the hustlers drew a deep breath. "Why, sure," he consented. "If that's really what you want, just leave it all to me. Private Mardi Gras, eh? it all to me. Private Mardi Gras, eh? Costume ball with masks, and a crystal slip-per an' everything! Mind if I be the Prince?"

The little woman closed her eyes.

mon enfant. It shall be as you like!"
"Fine!" he concluded. "It's a new kind
of track for me, lady, but they'll never rule me off for not doing my best."

So it happened that the gallant old house, standing back from the road among forlorn oaks, was partially renovated and then visited by decorators who concealed its decay as best they could-skillful make-up artists applying grease-paint to the faded features of an old beau! Mam'selle Sport emptied her purse for that purpose. The Information Kid rallied his followers

and without trouble, secured their coöpera-Girls agreed to come because of Mam'tion. selle Sport. Masculine company was secured

solely by the promise of a "free feed."
"The lady's all right!" said Henry the
Rat. "This is going to be some party. We don't even have to bring our own. Goldie's gonna be Jonah of Ark, and she's got me framed for whiskers and a red nightgown:

Cardinal Rich Something-or-Other."
"Richelieu," sighed the Kid. "Ye-ah, I can see it's going to be quite a party!"

He would have called it off, but it had gone too far. Nor did he want to offend those with whom he had cast his lot. He was but reaping now the natural crop he himself had sown. In vain he sought to laugh it off as he had done in so many other predicaments. This was something different -something almost sacred. The story of Fidèle still rang like music in his memory. Obeying an innate sense of delicacy, he had refrained from any attempt to gratify the curiosity that was the mainspring of his

Certain obvious things had occurred to him. He had thought of the public library with its newspaper files; of old Antoine, who always remembered everything; of the convent that still stood by the river-But he forbore from these tempta-

THE night of nights arrived, and the young moon city by the Gulf prepared to don its civic cap and bells, and with a jester's hand, turn back the pages of its romantic history. Strangers thronged the romantic history. Strangers thronged the gayly bedecked streets, and the very air tingled with that delightful period of en-chantment which climaxes in the Mardi Gras. There is nothing quite like the city of the Creoles when she elects to fling aside the shackles of commerce, bare her co-quettish soul, and assume the rôle that is her very own! Under all the organized merriment, romance still waits for those who are young at heart and willing to believe. Both these qualities were possessed in a rare measure by the Information Kid, and yet he was never more low-spirited than now

By one of those occasional intuitionsstrange hunches that were the despair of his associates—he sensed the situation. Mam'selle's manner did not deceive him. She was apparently happy, marvelously so; and yet

in her very joyousness he sensed a note of impending tragedy. He felt himself helpless. If only he could He telt himself helpless. If only he could surround her with the city's flower and chivalry, instead of the rag-tag and bobends of cabaret and paddock! If Andrew McIvor were only here! Colonel Comerford, "Sweet Sue" Arlington, Father Joe anyone whose gentility was proved, and to whom he could turn for advice. But these friends of his great moments were all far away!

Not until the afternoon of the last day did Fortune, taking pity on his distress, comfort him with no less a personage than Leo le Blond, sportsman, Beau Brummel, hero of a thousand tales, the most picturesque plunger on the turf of two hemi-

spheres.

It was after the big handicap at Jefferson Park, and the ring was still hysterical from the effects of the most sensational betting coup in years. Not alone had the celebrated gambler saddled the winner, but he had backed it by wire in every city in the coun-And until it was all over, not more than a handful of people had been aware of his presence.

"That's what I get," mourned the Information Kid, "for not 'tending to business. Well, you gotta hand it to him! Some of these operators will be wearing sackcloth and ashes for a year! Sure a fine way of beginning Lent! I'll bet Leo puts on a party tonight, that will make the Mardi Gras look a pauper's funeral on a rainy day.

He reflected a moment, recalling to his mind various things about Le Blond. The latter was almost a legendary figure in the sporting world. The Kid had met him latter was almost a legendary figure in the sporting world. The Kid had met him once, only once. But gossip was plentiful; it always is about a man of Le Blond's type. How much of it was true, the hustler had no means of knowing. The Kid had never heard mention of Le Blond's wife, if there was one. On the other hand, men were fond of relating broad stories of the sumbles' gallanties to pretty women. The gambler's gallantries to pretty women. The stories seemed plausible enough. Vet the Kid recalled a night at Saratoga Springs, when little Queenie Cameron, who might have been expected to know the truth, had slapped Colorado Jones across the face, burst into tears and left the room shrieking:

"What do you know about thoroughbreds, ou damn dog? Mention Le Blond's name you damn dog?

again, and I'll kill you!"

Thoughtfully the young hustler made his into the crowded clubhouse.

glimpsed Le Blond in a room reserved for owners and their friends. The plunger was a fascinating figure, almost a stage type—tall and handsome, with gray, disheveled hair and a young, boyish face, now wreathed in smiles. He was standing behind a table on which was the huge silver trophy cup he had just won. The cup had been filled with champagne, and the gambler, silver ladle in hand, was serving as gallant host to the merry company that pressed congratulations upon him.

The young hustler waited his chance, and when the gathering had somewhat dispersed, he approached the table. Le Blond smiled

a welcome and extended a goblet.
"No, thanks," said the Kid. "Bit rich for my blood. Guess you don't remember

Blue eyes shot him a quick glance. the contrary, I recall perfectly. It's the young man who called at my home in New York late one night with two hundred thousand dollars done up in an old newspaper. I had mislaid it, and you returned it. What

can I do?"

The Information Kid hesitated. He hardly knew what he wanted, nor how to put it. "Why," he began, "the layout is like this."

Quite simply, he told the story of the unknown Mam'selle Sport who had played Toujours Fidèle, become a fairy godmother to youthful gypsies, and was now it was not the story of th in need of gallantries herself. He omitted only what had transpired in the dark drawing-room of the old mansion on the night he had first dined with her.

"And now," he concluded, "I'm sunk. This farewell party is going to be the greatest flop I ever pulled, unless "Unless what?" inquired I

inquired Le Blond. "Unless What?" inquired Le Blond.

"Unless I can inject some class into the field. I need a Prince guy to save the night, some one that will play up to her, and prevent—I don't know what."

He looked appealingly at Beau Brummel.

The latter's ice-blue eyes sparkled with the sunlight of appreciation. He laughed and howed.

"My boy, you honor me! What time do you wish me to be ready?"

PICTURE, if you can, the humor and pathos, the underlying drama and the grotesque absurdities that transpired at the farewell party of Mam'selle Sport in the old mansion of the Fidèles. Truly, it was a night when all things might happen!

Identity was undisclosed save in a room where Henry the Rat, in the robes of the Cardinal de Richelieu, had opened up a crap game and was loudly addressing a group of the King's Guardsmen: "Shower down, farmhands! Shower down! Five's his point; three to two, he don't five!"

In the great drawing-room where the musicians were masked behind flowers, Bedouin princes courted with baby Columbines danced the Chicago with Capand bowlegged minstrels in wrinkled tights whispered to corpulent Romeos: "Say, brother, what looks good to you in the fourth race tomorrow?"

AGAINST the kaleidoscopic background, two figures stood out with cameo One was the satin-clad figure of a gallant of the ancien régime, tall, princebewitching! The other was a masked vision of loveliness, dainty as a doll, ex-quisite as porcelain painted by Watteau. Leo le Blond was outdoing himself. Nothing could exceed the grace of his charming Never for an instant had he gallantries left the side of his companion of the eve-And she?

The Information Kid began to doubt the evidence of his eyes. Could this be Mam'selle Sport-this coquettish young enchantress who floated over the dance floor, whose slender figure bespoke joyous youth in every



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line, whose slippered toes were never still and whose merry laughter sounded from behind a tiny jeweled fan? Yet there could be no mistake. That was the costume she had selected. She had answered to his salutation. He could imagine no one else acquitting herself so charmingly as the reigning spirit of the evening.

The young hustler drew a breath of genuine relief: "Shows what class will do," he commented. "Le Blond certainly knows his stuff. Mam'selle doesn't know I'm alive."

He was grateful for the chance to be able to move freely among the guests, making sure misguided youths like "Pockets" Jackson didn't appropriate the silverware, and that Henry the Rat, striving for better illumination, didn't burn down the house.

It was almost midnight before the Information Kid, in his rôle of chargé d'af-faires, woke with a start to the real situation. He was descending the stairs to the drawing-room, when he beheld Leo le Blond's partner of the evening. Her back was turned toward him, and for the moment she had

relieved herself of powdered wig and mask.
"Well, lady," he greeted, "how goes it?"
The figure turned, and he found himself looking into the features of Queenie Dale, famous little danseuse of the Palais Royale.
"But—but," he stammered, "where's

Mam'selle Sport?"

"I don't know," said Queenie. "Haven't seen her since she asked me to put on this costume and take her place. I thought you knew-

The hustler, white of face, moved on and encountered Leo le Blond returning to his companion with a glass of sherbet. Kid clutched him.

"Say, listen!" he faltered. "Something's happened! That aint Mam'selle Sport! I tipped you wrong!"

The plunger regarded him calmly. "Tipped me wrong, eh? Well, I'm accustomed to that experience. What do we do now? Are we broke, or do we guess again?"

The king of the hustlers looked up, his gray eyes dark with sudden fear. "Brother," he moaned, "I'm afraid we're broke! She's rung down the curtain already! Stand here

a moment—don't go way, please!"

In the stress of his need, his quick wits began to function. He made his way quickly to the rear of the house, and in a dark corner of the kitchen located Cynthia, seated on a chair, hands folded in her lap, and

tears streaming down wrinkled cheeks.
"Mammy," he pleaded, "where's Mam'selle? What's happened? Where's she been all night?"

"Marse Kid," sobbed the negress, "Miss Fidèle's in the li'l room on the top flo' what used to be à chapel, an' she's dressed he'se'f up—oh, Marse Kid, she tol' me to leave her 'lone, but yo' better run up, honey! Yo' better go find out. I'm sca'ed!"

The Information Kid spun around swift-ly, darted into the hall, and ascended the stairs in long, silent leaps. He tried four

doors and found them locked-tried a fifth, gently, and it opened. The room was illuminated by faintly glowing tapers. was a small altar and a prie-dieu on which the motionless figure of a woman knelt, her head bowed on clasped hands. She was attired in the simple garb of a convent pupil, and for a moment he thought that she was

But presently the draft from the open door disturbed her; she turned, perceived that she was no longer alone, and rising, faced him quietly.

"You desire something, M'sieur Keed?" midnight," "It's midnight," he stammered. "It's midnight, and Prince—" He paused, closed his eyes, and backed against the wall. The convent garb had worked its charm: the door to his memory flew open, and he knew,

He opened his eyes and took a step forward. "Mam'selle," he pleaded earnestly, "do you believe in God?"

She smiled wanly. "I had thought not, but when the time came-" She indicated the altar.

"So do I," he nodded. move; I'll be right back." "Please don't

Le Blond was waiting patiently for his oung friend. Other guests, having found rather slow, were preparing to depart. "Well," said Beau Brummel, "did you

locate Mam'selle Sport?" The Kid made slow answer: "No, she's gone, but I found—" He stopped, and then continued in an unsteady voice: "That night in New York—we sat in your library. "That

There was a picture on your desk-the only one in the room-a picture in a silver frame. You kept looking at it."

The other's expression did not change. The hustler drew a deep breath, "Am I right in believing that the only woman in the life of a man, who was once a young doctor, was named Fidèle?"

For a long moment there was silence. Then there proved to be no need for spoken answer. The last sparkle died from blue eyes over which the lids folded as though to shield what otherwise would stand revealed. His face went sheet white. man whose iron nerve was the admiration of thousands, stood there with his soul exposed.

"I beg your pardon," said the Informa-on Kid. "Walk lightly and follow me." tion Kid.

He led the way to the room on the top floor-the tiny chapel, whose half-open door revealed a girlish figure still standing beside a prie-dieu. He stepped back and signaled for Le Blond to enter.
"Mam'selle," he called softly, "it is mid-

night, and the Prince has arrived."

Then he closed the door quickly, put his back against it, and stood there, waiting with pounding heart for Allah to reward him. Presently it came—the poignant, incredu-lous sob of a woman: "Leo! Leo! Mon cœur!"

And the man's response: "Fidèle!"

DESTINY

(Continued from page 75)

hair was loosened, and kicked at it till her heel was lost in her curls. She would soon have given her last

blanket to the wind and danced only in the damp and clinging veil of her lawn dress, if Joel had not stalked through the crowd with such menace that people dropped back before his mad eyes or felt on their shoulders the clench of his talons.

He confronted Niobe and threatened her with his fist, roaring:
"Shtop-shtop! You-you-Jazzabel!"

Niobe found him funny too, and she ran from under the shadow of his hand to the shelter of Bret's arms, and tried to make

him a partner in this hugest of jokes. Forgetting Joel, who was fighting a forest-fire inside his own veins, she suddenly pleaded: "Le's go back on boat and take a buggy-

But Bret was inspired to propose a race to an automobile he saw at the pier's end. This delighted Niobe, and she stumbled along with him.

A stranger sat gaping in this touring-car, but Bret opened the rear door and hurried Niobe up and into it, and pleaded with the

"For God's sake, drive to the Fenn house!" The driver nodded and cut through the crowd with the swish of a scythe as he sped away. Niobe was all for leaping from the car, and the puzzled wayfarers caught glimpses of an automobile in which a man fought with a desperate girl. Some thought it to be one of the kidnapings that were so frequent. But the car was fleeter than thought, and was gone before any rescue could be considered.

Arriving at the house, Bret carried Niobe inside. He did not trouble to explain to the staring butler, but he told Lydia the whole story and took upon himself all the

blame.

Lydia and Niobe's maid undressed the resisting girl, and the maid was perfect in the nice points of being completely deferential while completely disobeying her insulting mistress.

By the time Niobe was stripped of her ruined clothes, the bathtub was filled with cold water and she was plounced into it. She yelped at the shock, but her soul was redeemed by a miracle as by a baptism.

N IOBE came gradually to her old self, and sat in meditation, trying to recapture from her drugged memory the things she had done. She questioned Lydia, but Lydia knew nothing. She sent for Bret and begged him to divulge what he knew, but he lied and said that she had behaved per-She knew that he lied and demanded the truth, but he would not give it to her.

She sat brooding and groping through her mind, bringing back strange dim pictures like cloudy negatives from a developing solution that went all black in the light, but not before she caught glimpses of herself as a noisy Indian squaw, of herself as a cheap siren, of herself above all things, or beneath all things, trying to interest a crowd of strangers.

She grieved over her escaped soul retrieved after such disgraceful adventures, and she

cried out to Bret:

"My God, why didn't you let me drown?"
Bret clutched her hands and squeezed them a strange longing to hold her together, and he groaned:

"It was all my fault, honey-all my fault!"

She smiled at him with a nod of homage

and sighed a tender irony:
"Boasting again, Bret! You're always boasting."

She would neither talk nor listen for a long while, and he wondered where her mind was roving. At length she said: "You know, Bret, they say that alcohol removes the inhibitions and lets the real self

come out. Ordinarily I either ignore or despise a crowd of strangers. And yet when I was under the influence of-well, I wanted to thrill an audience by dancing. I was mad to dance and to be watched—to dance like an Indian, like a girl from the streets of Cairo, like one of those Greeks, like one of those interpretata—whatever it is dancers. Do you suppose that's what's eating my soul out? Do you suppose I'm really suffering from a suppressed desire to be a professional dancer? Do you suppose that's what's the matter with me? Do you suppose that's what it is, Bret? Do you?"

Bret tossed his hands in confusion: "You

spoke of it once before, a long while ago, when you were blue. Maybe it is. If it is,

I hope you get your wish, God forbid!"
It pleased and saddened Niobe to be so loved by Bret. He was such a good sport even in his love! He would not cheat her or his rival. He would not bully or whine. He would pretend nothing, except that he tried to smile when he was deepliest hurt; yet his sorrowful smile was the most powerful weapon he had.

And yet-she was at the age when it is a woman's nature to let the contestants for her body fight it out till one or other is vanquished and quits the field.



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The angel that had moved into Niobe's brain and flesh must accept and use and be controlled by its furniture, its necessities, its impulses. The race worked in her for its own perpetuation, and her elements con-spired so steadily for those ends that no new tenant could change them.

A man who inherits a tinshop must comport himself differently from a man who inherits an art store, and must gain his livelihood from different patronage. So the angel in Niobe was already an almost utterly dif-ferent angel from the angel in Joel, though they had been almost utterly alike before they entered their earthly tenements.

Already they had quarreled, profoundly and violently, and offended each other to a madness; yet they were drawn together, too, by a persistent attraction.

And now Niobe, even as her eyes bright-

ened with homage before Bret's chivalry, must be saying:

"That poor Joel Kimlin, though! What's happened to him? We mustn't throw him overboard too brutally. After all, he did try to save me from burning forever. He did try to save me from drowning once and for all. He tried and failed. You succeeded. You always do. You always will. And he will aways fail. So—"

She did not finish the thought in words. but Bret's mind knew the rest of it. He felt that he was losing her. He had been too efficient, too effective. As the food that stirs the appetite is the food that stimulates the secretions, so the food that the soul craves is the food that calls it forth.

In spite of his deference, his timidity, Bret could always take care of himself; he could always take care of her. He would never endanger her good name or her prosperity. If she threw him over, he would land on

his feet and get along somehow. But Joel called forth all the mother in her. He offered her the opportunity to suffer with him, to link herself with a failure, a victim of life. He offered her the mysterious solace that is granted to the wives of cripples, of drunkards, criminals, good men who fail and bad men whom evil makes its own. That was Joel's fascination. He proffered her the bitter-sweet cup that might contain poison, that something which the wives of saints and successful men never get out of

Bret studied her and seemed to watch her thoughts where they swam about like little goldfish in a marble pool. They seemed to goldfish in a marble pool. avoid what crumbs he threw, and to be drawn to a rusty hook suspended above them with a withered bait.

He sighed with intuition:

"Well, old lady, I'll go out and see if I can't do a little failing myself."

Niobe murmured:

"How you know women!"

Chapter Twenty-two

WHETHER it is true or not, as we fondly imagine, that our muscles are at the bidding of what we call our souls, there is no denying that our souls are largely at the mercy of our muscles.

Joel alcoholized was as unlike the Joel of bread and water as two people in two Everybody was in conspiracy machines. against him. He was a savior of the world, and the world spat on him. He would save it in spite of itself, damn it!

Alcohol made him a temporary paranoiac with delusions of grandeur and persecution. He was like the politician who grows scarlet with ire against an imaginary fiend which he calls Capital and personifies from the mutually destructive factions that battle for money; and who resolves to defeat the chimera for the sweet sake of a pathetic figure which he calls the People and concocts from the countless multitudes of the unlucky, the lazy, the unarrived, all jealous of each other and incapable of combination.

Joel's mania now was the somber majesty a Savonarola who can only redeem the world by tearing it to pieces. The arch-fiend of his universe was this smart Satan, Rattoon, who mocked him and tripped him at every turn, who revered nothing and ridiculed everything.

The first duty before Joel was to crush this Beelzebub. He stalked forward with the solemnity of a priest kneeling, and when a number of ribald spectators in bathing costumes laughed aloud, he lifted his hand with the denunciatory grimness of a hermit

He cursed them loftily and marched on, hoping to find Bret. His fingers twitched with yearning for Bret's throat in their embrace. He was laying the most elaborate plans within himself, and he thought aloud, muttering so gruffly that he frightened sev-eral women, whose hands felt for hatpins before their owners remembered that they had bobbed their hair and no longer fastened their hats to it.

For a long while Joel wandered about the beach and the pier, and finally into the streets of the town. Here at last he encountered the man he sought.

Bret, strolling aimlessly in exile from Niobe's presence, was wakened from his gloom by a howl of insane anger. He looked up, to see Joel staggering toward him on wabbling legs, with hands outstretched as if Joel were rather falling toward him than attacking him. In Joel's eyes there was a gory luster, but his words came from a lolling tongue that betrayed his condition.

This was by no means the first time that Bret had been assailed by an intoxicated man, and he was of the belief that fighting a drunkard is as poor business as fighting a woman: there is small credit in winning and even less in losing. The only decent thing to do in either case was to run.

Once more he let Joel put him to flight. He faced about, darted into a corner drugstore, and out at a side entrance. Joel fol-lowed him uproariously and insisted that the druggist was hiding the yellow dog somewhere.

His muscles, famished for exercise and lacking their proper victim, turned upon in-animate objects. With a long sweep of his arms he cleared the soda-fountain bar of all its tall glasses, its squat dishes for sundaes, its jars of straws and its long spoons. The salesman behind the counter watched him aghast.

In the ornate mirrors beyond them he caught sight of mocking reflections and reaching back for missiles, found to hand pyramids of cold-cream jugs and flagons of toilet water and curiously shaped bottles of gaudy perfume, and nostrums guaranteed to cure almost anything, except when thrown. These he smashed into the mirrors, raining splintered glass on the backs of the sodamixers, who ducked among their ice-cream freezers.

The wan proprietor of the shop, who looked as if he had taken either all or none of his medicines, stared at the invader so hard that he almost broke his spectacles, then ran outside and shrieked for the police.

Officer O'Dowd, whose chief and most occuliar business had been the inspection of bathing-suits for length of skirt and transparency of material, came to the rescue. He was glad to be called to the higher duties of the policeman, and he ran at Joel without hesitation, only to find himself accepted as a worthy substitute for Bret Rat-toon. He wriggled out of Joel's bone-crushing clench in time to receive a blow on the side of the head like the smack of a baseball

O'Dowd went over onto a divan of sponges "marked down." He rose unharmed except in his dignity, and swung his long club. He knew the art of the locust: to strike with full power was to crack the skull of his client; but there was a deft trick known as "bouncing it off" the head. This knocked the receiver senseless without fracture or bloodshed.

Poising himself lightly as Joel came at him like a bear that walks, O'Dowd at just the nice moment danced the tip of his club on Joel's sconce, and Joel was a heap of inanition on the floor.

The angel lost contact with humanity; and when Joel's brain-cells were ready once more to receive and transmit, the eyes brought in the picture of a cell and a jailer musing through the bars of a steel door. The scalp sent down word of a lump of The stomach sent up gassy throbbing pain. eructations of mephitic taste. From whatever organ it may be that secretes remorse, there came a storm of it, along with anguish of every nerve.

The mania of grandeur and the sense of conspiracy against him had vanished like the rôle of an actor on the morning after the drama. Now Joel was at the nadir of pride, and as for conspiracy, he felt that the world had been all too kind to him. The public was the martyr, and he the criminal who wantonly disturbed its peace.

A certain faculty sat in the mood of a police magistrate who has had a bad night. Within himself he called himself to a bar of justice, and self denounced self as a vile dog. He sentenced himself, in his own words, as "a common drunk and a plain damn fool."

He rolled over on his cot, and his eyes and his stomach wept, while his whole frame

shivered like a smitten bell.

At last he slept. Next morning he was taken before a tangible police magistrate who had also violated the Volstead law and permitted Joel to perform a vicarious atonement for him. The words were short, but the sentence was long. "Thirty days!"

The angel in Joel learned now the moods that come upon the human animal kenneled in the dark. His soul seemed to wilt and

droop like a plant in a cellar.

One thing was certain to Joel: he would never dare look Niobe in the eye again. He would never dare show his ugly face He would never dare again in the town. to go back to his school again, for doubtless by now the whole universe, including heaven, had been advised of his degradation.

Chapter Twenty-three

BY the opposite way round, Niobe had arrived at the bottom of the same ditch of self-distrust. When Bret returned from trying to walk off his gloom and running away from Joel, he found Niobe's household in a stir. The servants were packing her trunks and Lydia's, and making haste as if the house were on fire.
"What's up?" he asked.

"Nothing's up," said Niobe. "Everything's ay, way down. I've disgraced the grand old family name and made my hideous face so notorious that I don't dare expose it in this town again as long as I live. for Lydia's poor sake, Bret, you'd better drop in on the editor of the town paper and see if he has heard the great news of how Salome danced the dance of the four blankets on the municipal pier. If he is thinking of printing it you might give him a cigar

or something to keep him from telling about "I'll keep it out of the paper if I have to buy the dirty sheet," growled Bret.

Niobe laughed raucously a moment with threat of hysterics, but she was too tired

for fireworks, and she moaned:
"Oh, God, Bret, isn't it ghastly, what we do in spite of ourselves! The first thing we

do is the last thing we'd ever want to do. What gets into us?

"The devil, I suppose," said Bret. "That's the most respectable theory from the point of age.

In spite of his prayers that she stay and face the music, Niobe was resolved to return to the country home where she could find seclusion at least, and meet none of the people whose memories would forever record her in her moment of disgraceful nonsense.

She would not even go by train, but sent the trunks and the servants by railroad and returned in the family limousine with Lydia and with Bret, who refused to be left behind, marooned on the beach.

The car was like a flying cell. Niobe was held in as close confinement as Joel. was only the scenery that moved, all going south at a great rate to some mysterious

Perhaps it was the numbness from sitting still so long, the irk of her members like children kept after school and mad to romp, that led her to her wild decision.

Lydia kept trying to distract her from the introspection of her own morose landscape to the passing charms of vegetable and mineral nature, and Bret kept shaking his barren brain in an effort to dislodge amusing jokes and stories for her diversion. But Niobe was making up her mind.

"Lydia, I'm going to be a professional dancer," said Niobe at length, quietly.

"Good Lord!" Lydia whispered.

But Bret tried sarcasm:
"That's a swell little notion! little idea! We're passing a sanitarium soon, and we'll just drop you there and engage you a little padded cell. What color do you prefer for the padding?"

"I'm going to New York and study for two or three years and then dance. It will be hard work, but that's what I want. going mad for something to do, and I think that dancing is the most useless and therefore the most beautiful of all forms of expression.

Lydia pleaded: "Oh, my dear, you're not You wouldn't do that to the famserious!

ily, now, would you?"
"I would and I will. You just watch me. The dear family name has lived through several murders and scandals, a dozen di-vorces and elopements, and I don't intend to wreck my life trying to keep it up. I'll change my name, but I'm going to dance. I'm going to dance! I'm going to dance!

"She says she's going to dance," said Bret to Lydia. "Did you hear her?" "I heard her," Lydia groaned in a scoff-

ing voice.

Wait till you see me," said Niobe. "I'm willing to wait forever," said Bret. "But one thing's certain: if it will make you happy to dance, dance your head off-or kick it off. And another thing is certain: if you decide to be a dancer, you'll be queen of them all, for you're the most beau-

tiful, the most adorable, the—"
"Kindly shut up!" said Niobe, whose nerves were so raw that they winced from

the impact of rose-petals.

(The angels in heaven could hardly believe what they had witnessed. The two who had gone down into the earth and into the flesh to find out why mankind was so futile before its opportunities, had already achieved nothing but passionate follies; both were in disgrace, and had won only the contempt of the populace; one was in jail and the other in shameful flight. It was indeed a baffling world.

(The visitors had not yet recognized each other. A certain interest had awakened, but they had parted without revealing whether it was sympathy or antipathy.)

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STREET OF THE

(Continued

he worshiped with a charmed and reverential wonder, as though with a clean heart and a fresh desire. Then, as he worshiped this goddess from overseas, a vague intuition began to crawl among his hitherto placid cerebral convolutions. Suddenly he was aware that there was salvation from himself and from circumstance; and he was filled with a great imperative need for his lost purity. Which is a thing for laughter and for tears.

ONCERNING the goddess from overseas: CONCERNING the goddess from overall she was a she was not at all aware that she was a goddess. In her own estimation, she, Peggy O'Hara of Pittsburgh, was a wise young woman to whom the mysteries of psychology and biology were as an open book. She realized herself to be a member of that generation which is unobtrusively sophisticated far beyond the antiquated flapperisms of the hoary Fitzgerald era. Bobbed-haired bois-terousness was to her a thing belonging to the childhood of the race, something quaint and poignantly juvenile. She knew that such touching and infant riotousness had gone, outworn and past its use, with the advent of the new worldly wisdom and tolerant cynicism for humanity.

When people asked her what she was

doing in Europe, she replied that she was traveling for culture and recreation, and (with an amused smile) because her mother quite superfluously wanted her to forget young Jack Pfeiffer, a dear boy at home who fancied himself in love with her. She was finding the galleries and museums splendid in spite of the fact that she was bur-dened with a timid Aunt Salome who tried to be notional about places and hours. Poor Aunty was so shocked at the nudes! Oh, yes indeed, some of the Italian men were simply too annoying. But Peggy was a wise young woman and could take care of her-

self quite perfectly.

Quite perfectly! Still, she was badly shaken when the horrible, furtive man who followed her from the Bargello came close to her in a crooked alley and began complimenting her with cringing insolence. There were tears in her eyes, and her voice shook, when she called to the tall young man in tweeds who was striding along some distance ahead of her.

The horrible Italian broke into a run when she called, and vanished around a corner in the direction of the Lungarno. The young man in tweeds wheeled at once and hurried to her, flourishing his stick.

"You know," said the young man a little impatiently, "you mustn't hang about these lanes alone."

Peggy discovered that she was trembling, but she laughed. "Oh, I guess I can take care of myself, all right," she said. "Then why did you hail me?" asked the

young man, looking puzzled.

Peggy smiled and slipped her hand through his arm. "It was awfully good of you to rescue me," she said.
"Don't mention it," commanded the young

man airily.

"Why not?" asked Peggy.
"Quite," replied the young man after a thoughtful pause.

SHE had him to tea with Aunt Salome at the Grand Hotel that afternoon. When she told him to go home and get his dinner while it was hot, he said: "Good-by -ah-Meg.

She said: "So-long, Toddy dear."

He was so beautifully British, from his clothes to his owlish lack of humor, that any American girl would have enjoyed making him fall in love with her. Peggy thought him handsome, too. And when he became

MALCONTENTS

from bage 27)

laboredly amatory, he was so appealingly young and inarticulate, that she had to laugh at him to keep herself from kissing him or crying over him.

A few days later they had tea at Giacosa -upstairs, where a string quartet lent discretion to an intimate conversation.

"What was that," asked Toddy, spoiling a tender look by biting into a cream puff, "about the duck?"

"The duck?"

"That is to say, about the egg?"
"The egg, Toddy?"
"Quite. You made some sort of comment about me looking like an egg, I mean to

"Oh! No, I said you were a good egg, Toddy.

"What, exactly, does that mean?" inquired Toddy, ingurgitating another cream puff.

"It means that you are just a perfect dear,

Toddy.

Toddy gasped and sat rigidly up in his seat. Only his Adam's apple bobbed for-ward to make way for the passing puff, and fell back into its usual place when that delicacy was in a position to be digested. He watched her with startled, unhappy eyes. "You know, Meg,"—he spoke with difficulty, -"you know I-you're a most awfully de cent sort.

Peggy laughed with a sob in her throat. Then she reached across the little table and covered Toddy's trembling hand with both of hers. "I love you too, Toddy, you fool!"

Then with a sweeping irresistible impulse, it became necessary, it became inevitable, that Toddy make a clean breast of himself and his mess in England and his affair with Ilaria to this girl. So, abruptly, with the crude and explicit realism of a man unskilled in speech, sparing nothing, veiling nothing, he showed himself to Peggy as he really was. Peggy listened quietly. At first she resented Toddy's bald narrative. This was not the first time that amorous young men, wearing a false face of penitence or shame, had boasted to her of their various affairs. But Toddy was different in that his suffering was obviously genuine. His hands were clenched, and his forehead glistened with trickling sweat. So Peggy listened quietly, and as she listened, the golden freckles stood out clearer and clearer upon the increasing cream pallor of her face.

When the last spade had been explicitly named and Toddy had fallen into a miscrable silence, she said: "But why did you tell me all that, Toddy?"

Toddy dabbed at his forehead with a mauve bandanna. "You're such a frightfully decent sort, you know," he answered.

"That was very brave of you, Toddy dear, and very honest," said Peggy, and for the first time the tenderness in her eyes was changed to adoration.

"But I'm not brave, you know. I'm a beastly rotter," Toddy was saying.

EARLIER that afternoon Ilaria found herself solitary at the place where she had told Toddy to meet her. Her typically primitive impulse was to go at once and fetch him. And since Ilaria was a woman who rarely had an impulse without translating it into action, she set out immediately in search of him. As she nosed from café to café (one would expect to find Toddy lurking in a café), her mind was black with premonitions of his infidelity. And when, upon entering the upstairs tea-room at Giacosa, she saw her premonitions fulfilled, and Toddy caressing the outstretched hand of a skinny little foreign girl, she was filled with a savage delight that her intuition had



If father did the washing just once!



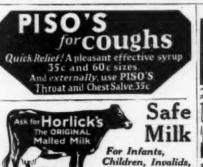
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For a moment Ilaria stood in the door-way, gloatingly at gaze, like a beast of prey that has satisfactorily cornered its luncheon The pupils of her eyes contracted. Her nostrils spread fanwise as though to encounter some delicious odor. With a slow, dreadful surge, her shoulders mounted up until they joggled the coral pendants in her ears. Her lovely flame-white hands were galvanized into rigid talons. So, having adjusted mind and body for a thoroughly effective entrance, Ilaria advanced into the room with a sinuous pantherlike tread.

Not until her face was within ten centimeters of Toddy's did she speak "So!" she hissed. "I have for

"I have found you-

Toddy's flesh-tints immediately became those of an El Greco corpse. Only the great traditions of his race forced him into speech.

"For God's sake, Ilaria," he said, "let's

"For Gous onne,"
not make a scene!"
"A scene!" cried Ilaria, flinging her hands
"Oh, heavens! A scene!
"Dhave her head. "Oh, heavens! I am be-When my heart is broken, when I am betrayed—by you! By you, whom I lawe! You say to me, let us not have a scene! What is a scene to me? I am a woman—desperate!"

Up to this point Peggy had listened with mild astonishment, but here she glanced across the table at Toddy and smiled.

"So this is her!" she giggled.

Toddy was frantic with the unusual neces-

sity of rapid thought.

"Really, Meg," he began. Then: "Oh, Ilaria, can't you hold your tongue a bit?

—Really, Meg, I can't tell you how extremely sorry-

"Don't interrupt her, Toddy," said Peggy, still giggling. "She's a movie.

scream!

Ilaria turned upon her like a pythoness. A scream?" The music had stopped, but aria hissed on. One by one the tea-'A scream?" Ilaria hissed on. One by one the tea-drinkers gave her their undivided attention. 'A scream? Not yet. There shall be no screaming yet. But you, young girl, it is best you should go while there is time. You are too young to see what may occur to this—this onion!" She meant Toddy. to this—this onion!" She meant Toddy "Go. Go now before it shall be too late." Ilaria stood erect, with one rounded arm pointing at the door. The tea-drinkers stared with goggled eyes, waiting for the garter-knife-for anything.

For a space of several seconds Peggy smiled trustfully into Ilaria's face. Then, inhaling slowly, she lifted her impudent chin, and pointed her impertinent nose at the ceiling, and with piercing intensity screamed, "Miow!"... Amid the ensuing clatter of dropped teacups, she said gently: "Come along, Toddy." She rose, taking Toddy's along, Toddy." She rose, taking Toddy's arm. Then she winked knowingly at Ilaria. "Us women! Oh, me!" she remarked, and thereupon she led Toddy away.

Blind with admiration, Toddy stumbled downstairs after her.

"Oh, I say," he observed, "you have tact! Fancy calling Ilaria a cinema!"

"AUNT SALOME, you remember the Eng-"Indeed I do, my dear." He dipped his

cake into his cup."

"Perfect fool, wasn't he, Auntie? He's the one I'm going to marry."
"Margaret! Don't torment me!"

'No kidding, I am, Aunt Sal."
'But my dear child! You know nothing whatever about him. He may be a perfect good-for-nothing, for all you know. He may be one of those dreadful English remittance men, for all you know. I simply will not allow you to be so wildly indiscreet. I'm not even sure you were properly

introduced.







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"We weren't. I had to pick him up. I'm a good picker, though, because he's going to be a duke or something when his father passes on."

"Well, my dear, I'm sure I wish you every happiness," sighed Aunt Salome. "I must

write your mamma."

Aunt Sally was persuaded to postpone her departure for Paris indefinitely, so that Peggy and Toddy were free to spend to-gether all the time they could possibly steal from his duties at the shop. They tasted the meager entertainment the city afforded, and found it pleasant for the spice of the ever-imminent and sometimes visible Ilaria. They made trips into the surrounding country: to Settignano, the home town of Michelangelo and other stonecutters; to that blue-cloud Fiesole, where they lunched on a restaurant terrace in the sun, and looked down upon the Arno, silver and insignificant in its wide valley, and the hazy blue domes of Florence. Sometimes at night they wandered through the mysterious streets, and the menace of the dark was sweet to them, and full of careless-hearted courage because Peggy's hand lay confidently in the crook of Toddy's elbow just below the rolling animation of his biceps. So they would wander for hours, loquacious and venturesome, stopping only for fatigue or for an enchanted kiss in the shadow of a wall. Peggy would stand gallantly erect when Toddy kissed her, serious-eyed, with her hands palm-pressed against his chest. "Not like Ilaria," he thought. Kissing Ilaria had been a more intricate process, reminiscent of a crowded He thanked God he was done with

N such a night they walked through the heart of the town. Toddy carried Peggy's cloak, for it was April in the Arno valley, and the city air was warm with perfume from the hills. Her arms were silver slips in the darkness, and under the street-lamps her shoulders caught reflections that gleamed also with the thin dazzlement of silver. Her hair was a cloud of shadow.

They walked across an empty square, past a colossal statue of Dante, past the row of peaked shadows that fill the loggia of Santa Croce—into the Via dei Malcontenti, the Street of the Malcontents. A straight, evil street: even by day it lies empty between high walls and blank high buildings, intently silent, like a blind man listening. At night it is a tremendous trough of darkness, utterly still under the stagnant weight of evil that fills it up like dead water. . . . Down the Street of the Malcontents, Peggy and Toddy wandered happily together.

Peggy laughed nervously as she spoke.

"You know, Toddy, I'm a little afraid of

this street."

"No need to be," said Toddy. "It's not half as risky as the little crooked ones near the river.

"Just the same, I'd be scared here alone," she said. "If there were only some sound beside our feet on the pavement!"

Then like a ripple upon the black waters of stillness, as if in answer to her words, sound came: music-music muffled and uneasily shrill, deadly and menacing in its cadence of joy. In this blank street there was no discoverable source for any music. It seemed to throb in the pavement, to trickle like stone-sweat down the walls of the flanking buildings. It quivered even in the body of the stillness that lay like a tarn over the long street. .

For a while they walked in silence, with vague fear breathing coldly between their

shoulders.

Then, suddenly and discordantly, they laughed together for relief. Here was an open door and a vestibule with a small light burning, a stair. They could hear voices and the sound of dancing feet, and the clear, cheap music of a mechanical piano.



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"Toddy! It's a dance! Let's go in. I'm crazy to dance with you. I never have.
"Oh, but I say!" Toddy remonstra

Toddy remonstrated. "It doesn't seem to be the sort of place one brings a lady this time of night.

"Don't be stupid, Toddy. I love dives. I've been in any number of them, and I'm still alive.

"But Meg," he protested, "this isn't the sort of place one goes."
"Why, Toddy, I think you're afraid!

Please don't be silly. Take me in just for

a minute."
"Quite," said Toddy coldly. They entered the narrow vestibule, and climbed the narrow stair.

T was a large, windowless room, crowded IT was a large, windowiess room, creating with slowly dancing couples. Upholstered benches ran along the walls, with small wooden tables in front of them. From the high ceiling hung a single electric lamp, draped like a blowzy street-walker in brightly colored scarfs, nebulous now in gossamers of tobacco-smoke. There was swirling motion and violent noise and a close smell

As Toddy and Peggy stood in the doorway, the player-piano in the corner clanged to the end of an Argentine tango, and the dancers drifted back to the tables and the waiting drinks. A crowd of some fifty peowaiting drinks. A crowd of some fifty peo-ple! The women, flagrant and fleshily squat, swarthy even with dyed gold hair, were obviously, almost virulently seductive after the manner of their kind. The men, some nondescript Florentines, some slender officers in gray or blue, were all cut from an identical pattern: drink-flushed faces and burlesque black mustachios, and melt-ing brown eves that shone and shifted from ing brown eyes that shone and shifted from woman to woman.

Toddy and Peggy found a table near the piano. "Oh, I love it!" she exclaimed when they were seated. "It's so perfectly low!"

The piano began again, and the couples rose and hurried out upon the floor, to grip and shuffle in time to another rhythm from and Similar the Argentine.
"You seem," said Toddy sulkily, "to enjoy

this sort of thing."
"Oh, I do!" she answered excitedly.
love it!" It was uncomfortable, though It was uncomfortable, though, the way the officer at a table diagonally opposite kept staring. He was a short, stockily built man with a ruddy face and Tuscan blue eyes with which he leered and smiled Peggy was used across the room at her. Peggy was used to the insolent stare of the Italian gentleman, but this man was different. "It's just the ordinary stare," she told herself, trying to ignore him. But—he was signaling to her, making odd gestures with his hands and mouth, as though with a meaning she could not understand. Under the nervous strain of his attention, her hands began to perspire coldly.

"Let's dance, Toddy, and then go," she

They went out upon the floor and danced very badly together, because Peggy had no thought but to get away. Her mind was confused with a nervous panic. The music languished on interminably. She was dizzy with the whirl of people around her, and the heavy whirling air. On, on thrummed the music, as though it must go on forever. . Suddenly with a clangorous crescendo of staccato chords, it came to an end, and the piano wheezed and whirred into silence.

"Get my cloak, Toddy," said Peggy breathlessly, "and we'll go." Their table was diagonally across the room from where they stood.

"Right-o!"

"Bellinal" said a caressing voice behind her. "Ah, troppo bellinal" Then a warm hand fell soft on her bare shoulder, and passed lingeringly down the length of her bare arm.

"Toddy! He-he touched me!"

Toddy went pale as cheese, but no one



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Stop Snuffling



LIONEL STRONGFORT

ent 1738 Newark, New Jersey, U.S.A.

could have denied that he acted very well. He turned and looked long and carefully at the blue-eyed Italian.

"I shall remember your face, sir," said Toddy. Then he turned to Peggy. "Now, Meg, first of all I must get you home. Come along, my dear.

walked in silence back along the They Street of the Malcontents. Peggy cried as she clung to Toddy's arm with both her she clung to Toddy's arm with both her hands tight just below his rolling biceps. "I'm sorry, Toddy." Her voice was young and frightened. "I'm sorry I made you go in there, Toddy."

Quite all right," said Toddy coldly. "Be careful, Toddy, wont you? Toddy laughed.

ODDY knew what he must do, and he A set about doing it with no loss of time. But it was not until the next day at the cocktail hour that he found his man having a Cinzano with some of his military friends in the smartest of the three smart restaurants in the Via Tournabuoni. The stocky blue-eyed officer was laughing at some Italian joke when Toddy Harrinton strode up to him.

"You rotten bounder!" remarked Toddy. The officer recognized Toddy at once. He rose with a conciliatory smile, and began to struggle with English.

"I must tell you how sorry I am for lasta he said. "Perhaps lasta night I much to drink. I cannot know night," have too much to drink. you are with a lady. A lady does not come to such a place. I have not understand to such a place. I have not understand what she is. But I am so very sorry." From an Italian point of view the ex-

planation had been graceful and satisfactory The Italian stood smiling with blue eyes and white teeth, evidently waiting for the conventionally courteous reply. But Toddy glowered.

"You cad!"

"Cadda?" repeated the officer. "I do not understand that cadda."

"It means," shouted Toddy, "that you are a dirty little beast!" His shout centered the attention of the entire restaurant upon himself and the officer.

Then the little Italian behaved in a way that was unsatisfactory and disturbing to Toddy. His eyebrows went up in an exression of amused regret. He shrugged.
"I am so serry you feel theesa way." He
drew out his wallet. "Here," he said with
a stiff bow, "is my carda. The friends will arrange."

"I was expecting this!" cried Toddy breathlessly. "You think you will be safe because you're an officer and know how to fence when I don't!"

"If you will prefer more the pistol?" sug-

gested the Italian courteously.

Then Toddy began to shout. shouted, he grew deadly pale. His voice slipped into a half-hysterical falsetto. "Pistol!" he screamed. "I'll jolly well not soil my hands fighting a cad like you with anything! What you deserve is a damned sound thrashing. And what you deserve

The officer shifted the hilt of his saber into a more convenient position. "If you are vulgar with the blows," he said, "I must employ my sword for defense." He paused waiting, but Toddy stood quite still. "Until our emporing." Until our appointment, then, signorino,' said the officer, bowing again and turning his back.

Toddy muttered and moved his hands aimlessly. He looked around the ring of faces that surrounded him, eager, hostile and amused faces. Then he tried to laugh. "A duel!" he said. "What rot! Thinks he can frighten me. . . Look here," he said to the crowd plaintively, "I don't know any-thing about duels!" Some one laughed.

Toddy turned hesitatingly toward the door. "Fellow wants a thrashing!" he repeated. Then, followed by a hundred eyes, THE MORLEY CO., Dayl. 778. 10 S. 18th St., Phila.



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he wandered aimlessly out into the street. "Duel!" he muttered, trying to laugh again. "The bounder wants a thrashing!"

"HERE'S your letter at last," said Aunt Salome on the morning of the third day. "I'm so glad it's come. It isn't natural for young girls to be worrying. Heavens, what odd writing your young man has! It's like snakes. No, it's more like telegraph poles—with wires."

Peggy ripped the envelope jaggedly open with her forefinger. She frowned at the two inclosures, with eyes that were darker

than ordinary in her pale face.
"Damn!" said Peggy after a moment's puzzlement. "It's in Italian!" Then she glanced at the signature and drew a sharp breath. "Aunt Sally," she said, "where's the Italian dictionary?"

Peggy sat down at her desk and very patiently worked the things out with pencil and paper. At the end of five minutes she giggled.

"What is it, dear?" asked Aunt Salome anxiously.

"It's a note and a newspaper clipping. Just a minute and I'll show you."

At the end of five more minutes, she had handed Aunt Salome a neat transcription in her round, careful hand. She watched while Aunt Salome read:

Dear Signorina-

I enclose for your entertainment a newspoper cutting which I imagine you will regard with interest.

Most cordially, Ilaria, The Marchesa di Mortedella da Bologna.

And the clipping:

I desire hereby to make it public that Signorino Todhunter Harrinton of Florence, having insulted me, and having been challenged by me, has refused to give the satisfaction customary among gentlemen.

Rafaele Banducchio, Captain, 141 Royal Cavalry.

"What are you giggling about, Peggy?" said Aunt Salome. "I'm sure I can't make head or tail of either."

"I was just thinking," Peggy answered, "what a wonderful time we are going to have in Paris." Then suddenly she pressed her handkerchief against her mouth and ran into her bedroom, slamming her door behind her.

ALL this occurred no more than three years ago.

Nowadays, on entering a certain shop in Florence, one is apt to be waited upon by a pleasant and rather young Englishman in excellent though shabby tweeds. An observant person will notice that the friendly salesman lacks the usual amount of back to his head, that his cropped yellow hair is quite gray at the temples, and that his cheerful ruddy face is bruised and mottled from the small continual blows of dissipation. That is young Toddy Harrinton.

At the noon hour one may see him leave the shop and cross the pavement to a little roadster that has been drawn up to wait for him at the curb. He will climb in sullenly and be driven off for a cocktail by the striking dark lady whose very lovely hands are upon the wheel.

In this manner the sight of Toddy being driven about in Ilaria's little car has become as familiat to Florentines as the square golden tower of the Palazzo Signoria, and the story of his frequently foiled attempts at truantry have got to be as well known as the circumstance of Mussolini's rise to power.

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When the winds blow raw and chill and rheumatism starts to tingle in your joints and muscles, get out your good friend Musterole.

Rub this soothing white ointment gently over the sore spot. As Musterole penetrates the skin and goes down to the seat of trouble, you feel a gentle, healing warmth; then comes cooling, welcome relief from Old Man Pain.

Better by far than the old-fashioned mustard plaster, Musterole does the work without the burn and blister Grandma knew so well.

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BLOOD AND TEARS

(Continued from page 47)

strings of her fiddle, watched while the leading lady was made to set her small palms down into the sanguine mixture and then to rub them clean on her apron with a quick, downward gesture, while large, shin-ing tears were affixed to her cheeks.

Blood and tears! Tears and blood! The symbols of human woe commanded as coolly

as ham and eggs!

Carey went home to Preston House in the late afternoon and plunged remorsefully into the placid life within the high-walled garden, but if peace of mind had been difficult before, it was impossible now.

THE spring rains were on, voluminous, flooding; but Carey took his walks unfailingly, parking in a cranny of the wall the rubbers the sisters insisted upon. He had done twelve blocks one day when he came to a particularly awful crossing. It was a lake. Men from the street department in high rubber boots carried women and children across the muddy, swirling water, and he stood still to watch. Children splashed and squealed and loved it; old ladies shivered and minced—a small, dark girl, darkly dressed, rather colorless, stood apart, wait-

ing her turn.

carrier came slopping up to her suddenly, and caught her up capably but sans ceremony. She gave a stifled cry, looked wildly about her, threw a quick glance of appeal at Carey Preston, tried to pull her skirt down over her slim legs as the man delivered her at the car steps, slipped, clutched unavailingly at the hand-rail, and went down into the seething pud-The car, loaded beyond its limit, speeded away, churning water as it went. The man caught her up again, explaining loudly and clearly that the fault was her own, carried her back to the sidewalk and at once set off again with a giggling child under each arm.

She looked so little, so bedraggled and forlorn that Carey went up to her, though she wasn't, he noted, the sort of girl at whom a fellow would look twice. He asked if he could help her, and she answered, bewilderedly, that she must go to Hollywood. She spoke with a strong French accent-"'Olywooood," she called it, and the maligned word took on new and plaintive charm. It sounded a little like Holyrood. Carey explained to her that she was already in Hollywood and inquired as to the exact location she wanted, and she produced an address from a small, mud-smeared handbag, making a little grimace, trying to tidy herself with a tiny, inadequate handkerchief. She was trembling with cold and fright, and her teeth were chattering.

"Well, you're a long way from it," he told her. "You'll have to transfer—take two cars, unless we can get a taxi."

The idea of a taxi seemed to terrify her, and he gave it up at once, but the man in the rubber boots said it might be twenty minutes before there was another car, easttrouble on the line.

"Then," said Carey firmly, "you must come in here"—he nodded toward a tea-room—"and get warm and dry. You're room—"and get warm and dry. almost having a chill, you know."

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"Non, no, no, nevair mind! I wait." She shook her head, but he took a firm grip on her slim forearm and guided her to the threshold, and there, looking up at him for a troubled instant, she seemed to see something reassuring, for the rigidity went out of the small figure, and she went in without further protest. The little place was steamily warm and comforting, and he ordered hot coffee. "Oh, please!" he begged boyishly. "It's nothing! And—and I've just been in France myself!"

"Oh-you know France?" It was a hungry little cry, homesick and heartsick, and a faint color came into her white face. It occurred then to young Preston that, while she was the sort of girl one wouldn't look at twice, if by any chance one did, well, one would keep right on looking. She was but newly arrived in California, in America. She had come to join relatives, and the relatives were not there; they had never received her letter; they had moved away. The people who lived at her aunt's address were renting her a room,—"so small a room for the so large price,"—and she wished to give French lessons. She understood very well how to give French lessons; but how-she asked him-should one give the French lessons without the pupils?

Carey was rosily sure that there must be oodles of people, slathers of 'em, falling over each other to take advantage of getting genuine French, the real Parisian accent; but they were, it appeared, performing no such antics. There had been a series of dreary disappointments; people who refused point-blank, people who promised and then failed, people who took lessons and did not pay. She was on her way, now, to the last surviving possibility—one Mrs. Jenkhs, who would take a trial lesson without payment and then make up her mind; and she must make haste. It was already late. She fished determinedly in a small, anemic purse; Monsieur must permit her to pay her share, else she would know that she had been indiscreet-

There was something, he decided, rather bleak about her little face, for all the babyish mouth, the candid, troubled eyes. permitted her to contribute her fifteen cents, but he announced his unshakable determination to see her safely and dryly to Mrs. Jenkins' door, and again she considered him for a long moment in silence before she acquiesced.

She did not talk very much on the two street-cars. A bruised and bitter spirit, this child of a war-scarred land. "Oh, oui, I child of a war-scarred land. "Oh, oll, I saw, I knew. I was not too young. I was nine when it began; I s'ink I was ninety, when it was over. We are four girls at 'ome—too many. I s'ink I will come 'ere to seek my fortune. Now—'' She gave a slight, Gallic shrug. "I 'ave only—Mrs. Icaline!" Jenkins!"

AT the edge of Mrs. Jenkins' lawn, she thanked him gravely and sincerely and took definite leave of him. He was, please, not to wait, and it was not necessary to give Monsieur her Los Angeles address; he had given himself sufficient trouble as it was. He had been of a kindness so great, so amazing, in this cold land— She wished him a sedate good-day and went steadily through the garden and up the front steps, and he saw the front door close behind her.

"But I'll just wait five minutes, to make he decided, stepping behind a tree across the street and lighting a cigarette.

In less than four she came out again, ran hastily down the steps and the walk. There was a look of panic on her face, and she stood still in the street for an instant, clasping and unclasping her hands. Then she set out swiftly in the direction of Los Angeles, but she walked unsteadily, her head down, and he thought she must be crying, and he crossed the street and followed her at a little distance. When she boarded a car, he meant to get on too. The child was bewildered; he must find a way of helping her, must break through her reserve, her distrust.

Car after car passed her, but she did not slacken her pace, and at last he caught up with her, came abreast of her, spoke.



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Such as stage stars use.

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We on the stage and in movies are careful of our looks. And we are extravagant. have always had my powders made to order, by the greatest experts I know. They cost me \$5.00 per box. They were so exquisite that all my friends asked me to order for them.

When I offered my beauty helps to women I did not include this powder. It was too expensive. But thousands asked me for it. So I went to the makers. I said, "I can use a million boxes if put up to sell at 50c and \$1.00." They have finally agreed to do that.

So now you will find my powders—Edna Wallace Hopper's Face Powders-at every drug and toilet counter. There are two types. One is my favorite-a heavy, clinging, cold cream powder. I use it always, because it stays. But the same powder is made light and fluffy, for those who prefer that type. The heavy powder, in square box, costs \$1.00, the light, in round box, only 50 cents. Both come in three shades.

You will find these exquisite powders-the powders which bear my name. In all my 40year search I have found nothing to compare. Mail this coupon for samples. They will give you new conceptions of fine powder. I am delighted to now place it at your call.

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As Your Hair Grows Grayer

-does he notice other women more?

Smart women never let themselves look old! Gray hair, however handsome, denotes advancing age.
We all know the advantages of a youth-

ful appearance.

Your hair is your charm. It makes or mars the face. When your hair fades, turns gray and looks streaked, just a few appli-cations of Sage Tea and Sulphur enhances its appearance a hundred-fold.

Don't stay gray! Look young! Either prepare the recipe at home or get from any drug store a bottle of "Wyeth's Sage and Sulphur Compound," which is merely the old-time recipe improved by the addition of other ingredients. Thousands of folks

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DAYS WEAR ONE 7

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The hard little Gallic shrug again, and a curling lip. "Oh, nevair mind. . . . It does not matter. Madame Jenkins 'as change' 'er mind; she 'as gone to play Mah Jongg!"

Jong!"
"Well, that's abominable, of course," said
Carey uncomfortably, "but there are other
people—there must be. And—hadn't you
better take a car? You couldn't possibly
walk it, you know!" He looked down at
her small, shabbily shod feet.
For answer she stood still, opened the

mud-smeared hand-bag and took out the tiny coin purse which she opened and held upside down with a swift, dramatic gesture. "One mus' walk," she said simply. "But—but what are you going to do?"

he stammered.

Again the bitter bleakness in the white, small face, again the shrug. "Z'ere are two s'ings for me, monsieur. One is—not possible; ze ozzer is—ze river!"

A N insane, hysterical desire to laugh shook Carey Preston, despite her pale desperation. She had never seen the Los Angeles river, poor lamb. . . . The puddle which had served to introduce them would be just as deadly. . . . But good gad, what could he say or do? He mustn't strike a false note! If only his good, gentle sisters were there!

"We thought, dear Carey, that you might

care to keep up your French-"
Rachel's weary, high-bred voice seemed to float to him from the rose-garden.

"Look here," he cried out joyfully, "you've got a pupil—one that wont break dates or change his mind, and who'll pay in advance!"

"'Oo do you mean, monsieur?'

"To do you mean, monsieur?"
"I mean me!" said young Carey triumphantly. "Now, don't shake your head, mam'selle! Oh, I don't wonder you hesitate, but see—here's my card—and I'll—I'll bring my sisters to call on you; I've got five sisters and I'll bring four of 'em. And they've been wanting me to keep up my French; that's the solemn truth! You can ask 'em yourself!"

She was not lightly won to the idea: if

She was not lightly won to the idea; it took a great deal of hearty young eloquence to convince her, and even then she would accept only one dollar of the three he wanted to advance for the first lesson. It would be impossible to receive him where she was rooming; she must come to Preston House. He did not dare to urge luncheon, and he put her on her car with a positive promise of appearance at three the next day his crafty plan was that old Simon should appear with the tea-tray just as the lesson came to an end.

HE sisters were mildly pleased, and Deborah and Dorcas readily assented to the idea of rather nourishing sandwiches instead of wafers for tea, but a faint shadow settled on them when he mentioned the price he was paying for the lessons. They had been given to understand that really good teachers got only half that, but of course, under the circumstances, dear Carey must do as he felt about it.

It was odd, and pathetic, he thought, how maiden ladies almost always grew parsi-monious. Well, once he came into his in-heritance, they should have every luxury, bless their old hearts!

She rang the bell in the garden gate at precisely three o'clock, and Deborah and Dorcas went down the prim paths with him to receive her. He could see that the wariness of her gaze relaxed at sight of them, and the sisters were patently charmed with her. The hand-bag and the shabby little shoes were cleansed of mud-stains, and her frock, for all its simplicity and the fact that it was far from new, had, even to masculine eyes, an air.

The lesson got under way at once, and

he found her an excellent teacher, quick, clear, thorough, and she held him rigidly to the business in hand. Deborah and Dorcas, with Simon and the tea-tray at their heels, came in on the stroke of four, and

she was persuaded to stay.

"Will you not give us this pleasure?"
Deborah wanted graciously to know. "We live so quietly at Preston House, mam'selle, because of my sister's failing health, that a

guest is a rare treat for us.

Carey wished she would eat more sand-wiches, but at least she had the comfort of tea in precious old china, hot and hearten-ing, and it brought a faint color to her cheeks. A fellow had the feeling, in spite of her mousiness and pallor, that she could light up on occasion. And the poise of the little thing, the breeding, the pride! The days ceased, then, to drag themselves like sleepy snails across the calendar; they

did a minuet, and reels and rigadoons; sometimes, when the spring warmed softly about them and lessons were had in the garden under the ancient pepper trees, they danced

on their toes, whirling.
"Mam'selle," he ventured one mild morning while they waited for old Simon's punctilious announcement of luncheon, "you never tell me anything about your home, about yourself! You know me like a book —but you never talk about yourself!"

The girl gave him a long look, steady and a little sad. "I will talk, presently, monsieur," she said. "When it is time, just before—the end, I will tell you of me. I

will tell you-much."

"Oh, but, I say, there isn't going to be any end!" He was in a panic; he flushed pinkly. "Good Lord, I haven't learned French yet! I—why, you certainly want to finish the job! I expect a diploma!"

SHE said he was making most excellent progress; soon he would have all the French he needed for purposes of travel, of reading. Thereupon, with deep guile, he let the excellence of his work fall off. He was lazy, careless, forgetful; she was sharp with him. Her reserve seemed to deepen with the days, and there was a quality in it which puzzled him. Sometimes, looking up from his book, he found her dark gaze upon him with an expression which baffled him. She treated the Misses Preston with a spect which was almost reverence, and they beamed under it.

Then one day she missed her appoint-ment and came early the next, white, shaken, heavy-eyed. She had been robbed of all the money she had earned; the little handbag had been taken from her on a crowded street-car, and the woman in whose house she was rooming had laughed rudely, mocking her tale, made scathing remarks about the French—asked for her room.

"But of course you will stay here, with us, until your money comes from France!" Carey was emphatic. mustn't she?" "Deborah, Dorcas,

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nd

"We will be happy to have you visit us, mam'selle," Miss Deborah said gently. "You will make us very anxious if you refuse."

The little French teacher dropped her pale face into her hands and stood so for a long moment, and when she faced them again, she was white and stern. "Very well, z'en. I accept your so great kindness. In very few days, I s'ink surely my money comes from 'ome. Z'en—I explain many s'ing to you. And now"—she threw back her head and expelled a long breath-"let us begin ze lesson."

She came back in the afternoon with her suitcase, and the Misses Preston flutteringly installed her in one of the long-empty guest-chambers, a great, high-ceilinged, dignified room which seemed to engulf her, to swallow her up; and young Carey, seeing her there beneath his roof, so little and alone and pitiful, knew at last what had



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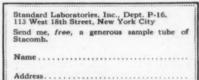
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happened to him, what had been happening to him as steadily, as gently, as naturally as the soft processes of the spring, ever since he had seen her fall into the puddle.

He must be careful; he must not frighten her. It would be better, more considerate, to wait until the money had come from her family, until she was no longer dependent upon his hospitality. There was her pride, her fine, upstanding pride-God bless her!to reckon with. He thought his discovery must be written in his face for all to read, and so he left her to dine with the sisters and sought out Jimmy Finley for the first time in nearly a month, and they dined together, and Jimmy suddenly and warmly urged a certain picture for the evening.

Jimmy Finley had to speak twice before Carey heard him. "Come out of it!" he rallied him. "I'm sayin' we'll slide up the street and see 'Family Traditions." He lighted a cigarette and regarded his friend narrowly. "I've a notion that it'll interest

"I dare say it will," said Carey blithely. "Everything interests me tonight, old son!

"Well, you'll get an eyeful, I'm tellin' you, but at that, I figure it's comin' to you. Vic is steppin' high and wide, these days, I can tell you!"

"Glad to hear it. I'm glad, too, that he gave up his notion of filming Preston House, or Sister Rachel's garden." They rose and

made their way toward the door.
"How do you get that way?" inquired Jimmy Finley. "Give up nothing!"
"Oh, then he still thinks he's going to put it over?"

put it over?"

"I'll tell the cock-eyed world he does," said Jimmy fervently.

Carey laughed indulgently. The frantic were not going to concern him that night.

AT a quarter before ten o'clock Carey let himself into Preston House with his latchkey and tapped in turn at the doors of Ruth and Naomi and asked them to join him in the library. They came after a brief delay, in high-necked, long-sleeved dressing-gowns, with rufiled night-caps framing their pale faces.

"Sister, he knows!" said Ruth to Naomi as they stepped into the room.

Carey stared at them from the hearth-rug. "My dears," he said, "will you tell me why you do it?"

"Yes, Carey, dear," said Naomi steadily.

"To earn money."

The little three-word sentence seemed to float and quiver in the stillness of the serene old room.

"But-why, in the name of all that's holv-

Ruth took up the tale. "I gather that you have seen a picture," she said. "'Family Traditions?' Yes. Oh, my dear brother, we are sorry to have given you such a shock! We should have prepared you, but you have said you never go to motion pic-

"It's the first one I've seen since I came home. A friend took me. But, Ruth—Naomi—" He spread out his hands helplessly and let them fall at his side.

was dazed, stunned.
"Sit down, dear," said Naomi gently. "It was-it has been for a long time-necessary to earn money. By the merest chance we heard of that opportunity; they pay 'extras,' as they call them, very well-never less than five dollars a day, and frequently we earn more. They are extremely glad to secure—gentlewomen." Her fine chin went up on that. "They are not—plentiful. We have been treated with every courtesy, brother. And our dear Rachel has never dreamed" she flushed-"that Preston House has been disgraced."

"Disgraced?" He crossed the floor at a bound and dropped to his knees before them

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where they sat on the rosewood sofa, and gathered the two of them into one embrace. "Why, there's never been a Preston so gal-lant, so game!" He choked over it. "Butabout the money! This thing bowls me over! Haven't you plenty? Didn't Father leave you awfully well provided for?"

The two women looked at each other in

distress. "He-yes, he did, dear," said Ruth, "but that was many years ago, and we have lived luxuriously. Please don't ask us now, Carey. Rachel is going to explain everything to you on your birthday-next Friday. Please wait, and be patient, dear!"

He jumped to his feet and began to walk excitedly up and down. "Good Lord, if excitedly up and down. "Good Lord, in your estate is used up, why didn't you use my money? Don't you know how gladly, how thankfully—" He broke off, appalled at the terror and misery so manifest in their two faces.

"Oh, Carey, don't—please!" It came from Naomi in a stifled sob, and she rose and went unsteadily from the room. "I can't bear it! Oh, I can't bear it!" She wept. Ruth, hurrying after her, threw him a pleading glance from the door. "Carey, I beg of you, do not mention this again until your birthday!"

THE last of his name sat on in the library of Preston House until the fire had burned down to a gray ash and old Simon's chickens were sleepily hailing the new day. The thing was incredible, ghastly, grotesque. The sisters had used his fortune. The girlmother had left him and his heritage unreservedly in their hands. They had promised her to give him a "happy and care-free boyhood," and they had kept their word, but—good Lord!

The dawn found him shivering with cold, but calm and steadied, and filled with pity and tenderness. After all, what did they know of business honor, of standards of integrity? Never a word of reproach should they hear from him. He would wait until Friday morning for the painful scene which must be gone through with, and then he would square his shoulders and set his face toward the future, with—oh, good Lord!—six women to fend for! It was pretty grim, when he had been going to play the king and the beggar-maid, to have nothing but empty and untrained hands to offer the little pale girl in the great guest-chamber.

There was a sense of strain throughout the household. Rachel, less well than usual, kept her bed. Ruth and Naomi hurried off after early breakfasts without seeing their brother; Deborah and Dorcas went about the grave business of conducting Preston House, with compressed lips and averted eyes; and Mam'selle would not speak to him in English, and the week dragged itself

dolefully along.

Carey was amazed to have his French teacher ask him to take her for a walk soon after breakfast on Friday—his birthday. "I s'ink we are too much in ze house," she said, with an odd eagerness in her voice. "Today I have ze great wish for ze mountain, for ze sea. Shall we go?"

"Mam'selle, I'd love it." He shook his head unhappily. "But today I must be with

my sisters.

Her fine brows lifted; there was a faint, provocative smile-the first hint of coquetry she had ever vouchsafed him. "But, when I ask? Ze first time I evair ask?" She came

close and looked up at him with appeal in her tragic eyes. "Oh, please!" All his sturdy resolves crumbled away. He broke his word to himself and caught her in his arms. "No," he said, "no, dearest! This day for my sisters, and all the rest of the days-all the days of my life for you! didn't mean to speak so soon-I swore I'd wait-that I wouldn't frighten you-But he wasn't frightening her, for after the first faint struggle, she was quiet in his



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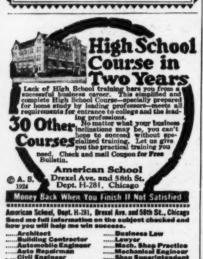
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embrace. He could feel-he could hearthe hammering of her heart, and when his lips found hers and clung there, she did not deny him.

"Carey, dear!" It was Naomi's voice in e hall. (She and Ruth had stayed home at day.) "Sister Rachel is waiting for the hall. that day.) you.

"Coming!" he called unsteadily. Then, to the girl in his arms: "Wait for me in Then, our corner of the garden. I'll come! wont be long!"

Then the little French teacher did a strange thing. Standing on tiptoe, she took his flushed face between her hands and kissed him softly and solemnly upon the brow. "Good-by," she said. "My dear—my dear—good-by!" And she turned and ran from him.

"Not good-by," he laughed. "Only for half an hour—twenty minutes—"

IT was two hours before he came before the sacret pepper. She was sitting under the ancient pepper. was two hours before he came to her. tree, with her hat and cloak on, and her bag beside her, and she was paler than he had ever before seen her.

He was almost as pale as she, and he looked as if the care-free, happy boyhood his girl-mother had begged for him had passed forever. He sat down slowly, limply, and his hands dropped between his knees. "I am so—stunned," he said tonelessly, "so horrified-

She frowned a little, looking at him. She had been ready to speak herself, ready, primed, tense; she didn't want—she didn't dare—to wait. "I have something to tell dare—to wait. "I have something to you," she said. He did not appear to hear her.

thought," he said, his lips curling in bitter self-scorn, "that my sisters had helped themselves to my inheritance. I was going to be very generous and forgiving about it, very magnanimous. Well, I wont have to be, because—they couldn't take what wasn't there. I thought my mother had a great fortune. 'Her face was her fortune,' Rachel says, 'and it was a very beautiful face.'
For twenty-four years they've sacrificed to give to me. Oh, when I think of myself, loafing through college, dawdling all over Europe, dozing away these two months—" He sprang to his feet and flung himself up and down the prim path. Then he halted before her and smiled wearily, winningly. "You'll just have to be patient with me, dearest, till I get my bearings again. It's not that I'm forgetting you—please believe It's just-

"You must listen to me," said the girl desperately, stamping her foot; and some cell in his bewildered brain registered dimly the fact that she spoke quite without accent. "I'm going away in a minute. I wanted to go without speaking to you, because, added without speaking to you, because, adult to everything else, I'm a coward, but I wouldn't let myself. Will you try to remember that one thing, when you're hating and despising me? That I did wait, and told you the truth?"

That cut sharply through his abstraction. "Hate you? Despise you? What are you talking about?"

"I'm talking about me," she said, still ith that desperate steadiness. "Myself with that desperate steadiness. "Myself—Ann Trevenna. That's my name. I've been here in the pay of Le Blanc. He came to New York; I've worked for the head office there. It was to let him win his office there. It was to let him win his wager—his bet that he could get in here and take a shot of the rose garden. I was to unlock the garden gate. That was why I had to stuy here, you see."

If he had been pale before, he was livid

now. "Then," he stammered, "you didn't—you aren't—"

She shook her head impatiently. "It was all lies—can't you understand? No," she answered herself, "you can't understand anything so mean, so base. Well, I'm asking

you to remember three things: that I thought it was a joke, a lark, when I took the job, never dreaming you'd be-you, and your sisters— And now I'm giving you back every cent and paying for my board and lodging"-she put a little sheaf of bills on the bench beside her—"and giving Le Blanc his money, every penny of it." She shivered, though the April day was sweetly mild and warm. "And that, although I opened the gate this morning, I closed it again. That's all. Except that I did wait and tell you."

She stood up, clutching her bag, then added: "I'm going to be ashamed, as long as I live, but I wont forget what it's been to be here, to know you. I'll try to forget, but I wont—ever." She had turned away from him and started down the iron gate, walking swiftly. "Wait!" he

He took a stumbling step. "Wait! Vou called hoarsely after her.

Then they both started at the sound of a scream, a thin, faltering scream, ragged, uneven, ceasing abruptly. Carey cried, "Rachel!" but he could not have told why, for never in all her ladylike life had she emitted a sound like that, and they both started running toward the rose-garden.

Miss Rachel Preston, shaken by the scene with her young half-brother, had gone out alone to her sanctuary for a breath of air, and she had found Le Blanc there, Le Blanc, who had slipped into the walled garden in the brief interval of the unlocked gate, and hidden—Le Blanc, with a camera-man grinding the crank of his machine, Le Blanc the vandal; and she had dropped at his feet, like a Vestal Virgin on the threshold of her temple.

Young Carey Preston charged blindly at Le Blanc, at the camera-man, at the ma-chine itself, with a red mist before his eyes. Some one was sobbing terribly; he thought it must be Mam'selle, only she wasn't Mam'selle any more. Le Blanc-what was it he was trying to remember? Ah, yes-once more he had ordered the symbols of human woe as coolly as ham and eggs!
"Bring me the blood and tears!" Her tears, the girl's tears—he didn't know her name, but he mustn't let her go away..... Rachel's blood, blue blood, quiet in her proud old veins; his own hot blood bright on his fists. Tears and blood-blood and tears.

LE BLANC had come on from Hollywood for a conference with the New York office. The New York office was highly pleased and satisfied with him, and he was highly pleased and satisfied with himself, because he had succeeded in a certain small and unimportant matter whereof he had made loud boast, because he had won a

His chief studied his serene face. "And it doesn't put a crimp in your triumph to remember that you killed the old lady?" he inquired.

"Nix on the sob stuff, Eddie," said Le anc peaceably. "Doctors had said she'd Blanc peaceably. snuff out, just like that, any minute. Good, easy exit, I call it. No, take it by and large, they're all in luck—sold Gibraltar to some hotel people for a sickening wad of jack—and speaking of such, the Trevenna girl tore up my check, you know, and threw it in my teeth with a large, handsome ges-ture, just before she disappeared. Sweet Daddy, but that cub raised hell and halleluiah to find her!"

"And that, too, failed to annoy you—two ce youngsters, getting their kid hearts broken-

"Where do you get that stuff?" the director inquired amiably. "Me? I made the match! And now"—he hitched his chair forward and lighted a cigarette—"about the new production?"

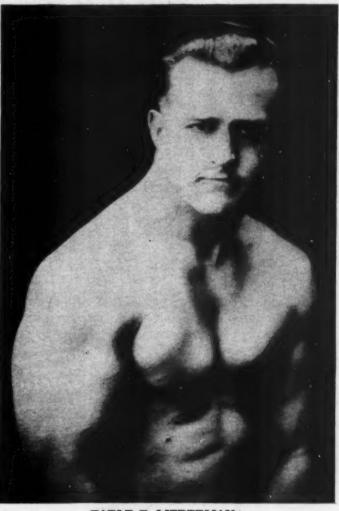
Wart On Your Nose

would not be noticed nearly as much as a frail, weak body. Yet, if you had a wart on your nose, you would worry yourself sick-you would pay most any price to get rid of it. But what about that body of yours? What are you doing to make people admire and respect you? Wake up! Come to your senses! Don't you realize what a strong, robust body means to you? It makes no difference whether it be in the business or social world-everybody admires the strong, robust fellow--everyone despises the weakling.

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challenging butterfly wasn't even worth his

cannonades of scorn. "Oh, I had my dose of fighting in that net, all right!" he cried out with one of his wide-armed gestures. "Of fighting like a herring in a seine! I stood my turn, and saw them mesh me in closer and closer." The movement of his thick-shouldered body was almost a shudder. "I caught onto their crazy machinery, and thought I was being whirled into wider circles of life. But all I turned out to be was a busy little goldfish paddling around a tepid glass bowl, like all the other busy little goldfish in that set. It was all so damnably predetermined and programmed and laid out for me! It was all so futile and self-defeating! And then a little bell seemed to ring somewhere in the back of my head, Cowles, and I had to get out of it. I had to get out of it or start

killing people. "You nearly did kill somebody," I flung back at him, stretching a point to shock him once more into sanity.

"D'you mean Daulis?" he demanded, laughing another of his mirthless laughs. "Not on your life. You can't kill Dresden china

"Do you imagine you added much to her

happiness?" I asked.

"Oh, it would hurt her pride, I suppose. But it would never interfere much with her heart-action. She's not the type for that. I know her, Cowles, considerably better than you do. And I knew exactly what I was doing when—when I dropped

"What were you doing?" I coldly in-

HE found it hard to answer me, apparently, as his opaque eyes came to a rest on the brown face bent over the beadwork.

"You can call it taking a cure, if you like," he finally proclaimed. "I went into retreat, as they used to phrase it."

"With a klootch to keep you company!" I derided, with a gesture toward the Indian woman on the wolf-skin.

"That was merely to make it final," he explained, quite without resentment. He turned back to his klootch, the next moment, and to her spoke a word or two in a tongue that was strange to me.

The woman got up, at that message, and passed out of the *illahee*, closing the door after her. But I noticed, as she went, that she was both younger and taller than I had expected. There was even an undulatory sort of grace in her movements as she passed me on her moccasined feet, though my final impression of her, for all her quietness, was one of intensity, of somnolent capacity for violence, like that of a copperhead coiled in sleep.

"You know, of course, that you're wasting your time," Prudyn said to me across restored quietness of the cabin.

"I wanted to keep you from wasting yours," I contended, resenting the cool com-

miseration of his glance.
"Time!" he laughed. "Why, there's no such thing as time left in my life. That's the blessing of it, the beauty of it. It's like being in a bath of stillness, where nothing happens, where nothing ever can happen."

I seemed to catch at a final glimmer of light. The man, after all, was a bit mad.
"I can't see," I said with challenging deliberation, "why you didn't shoot yourself."

He made no reply to that, though he sat for a moment or two studying me with his barricaded eye.

"I wish to hell you'd kept away from here!" was his sudden and altogether unlooked-for exclamation as he rose and crossed to the door.

(Continued from MAN page 69)

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I watched his silhouetted hulk as he swung that door open and stood staring up the wide valley.

"It's going to snow," he said in an oddly attened note of disappointment. "It's goflattened note of disappointment. ing to snow," he repeated; "and that means you wont be able to get away today."

I FAILED to see, as the day darkened into a premature twilight, on just what Pru-dyn had based his prophecy of snow. There dyn had based his propiety of show. There was no wind, and no perceptible drop in the temperature. But the stillness of that northern valley seemed oddly intensified. Prudyn's country seemed filled with a vast and solemn weariness. It made me think of a world that was going out, in the way an oil lamp goes out when its bowl is empty. A gray softness filled the hollow of the wooded hills, a mournful and lonesome softness that gave a homely appeal to the sound of the kettle on the sheet-iron stove, to the sigh of the draft through its cherry-colored coals. Outside the cabin, the tree-trunks took on a tired and timeless solemnity. The green of the lake gloomed down into a dull slate, without a breath to ripple it or a wing to cross it. And from peak to looming peak there was not a sound to break the stillness, the lonely subarctic stillness that floated like immaterialized swan's-down in the deepening light that seemed to be waiting for something. Twice I went to the door and looked out, trying to decipher what this ghostly something might be. I found only a never-ending gray softness, a sustained quietness that it would have been

sacrilege to break with a shout.

I could see Prudyn's nitchie, in the gray dusk, cleaning out his log-walled smokehouse and making it ready for a bunk. It was not without significance, I remembered, that he should have asked Nanoosa to sleep there and leave the illahee to the two men. But I would not hear of an arrangement like that. I may have come four thousand miles to separate them; yet I found myself without the will to banish any woman, white or red, to an outhouse where gutted fish had once been smoked. As it was, she must have hated me quite enough. But there was a quiet-handed efficiency in each and all of her movements as she went about her task of building feathered pine-boughs into a floor-mattress, and carrying out blankets and a fawn-skin pillow stuffed with pine-needles. I noticed this same self-immured efficiency in her as she prepared our supper and waited on our table while we ate it. Not once, in my presence, did she address herself to Prudyn. She moved about, as meek and silent as a dog, seeming to read her master's want in his eyes, so that his words, when he did speak, were monosyl-labic and meager. Yet his eyes had dwelt on her, I thought, with a mood of tenderness, when I spoke of the crowd of sixty thousand I had pushed through at the Polo Grounds, three days before I started westward.

"I escaped that labyrinth, thank God!" murmured my bearded hetairist as he emerged from his meditations.

"To revel in this sort of thing!" I retorted, not without irritation, as I once more strode to the door. It was a movement, I imagine, to relieve myself of the accumulating loneliness under which my spirit was sagging like a pine-branch weighted down with wet snow. And Nanoosa, I noticed, stamped her moccasined feet as she came in from the smokehouse. Against her hair, black as a crow's wing, I perceived a sprinkling of silvery white stars that vanished as I studied them. And that made me turn back to the doorway and look out.

I could see, then, that it had begun to snow. The impalpable swan's-down was



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precipitating itself in the valley quietness. It was coming down in a silent, soft descent, whitening the world before my eyes, filling me with an odd sense of isolation as it de-scended flake by hurrying flake. It made me think of a pall—of leisured burial after a leisured death. It continued to snow as Prudyn and I sat by the stove and smoked, and the Indian woman on her wolf-skin, back in the shadows, sewed at her interminable beadwork. It was still snowing when I took my lantern and went out to my waiting bunk in the smokehouse. And it snowed during all the night as I lay surrounded by creosotic odors that made me feel like a mummy swathed in bitumen, a mummy to whom time and place were no longer a matter of moment.

It was still snowing when I emerged from my pyramided white igloo and waded to the cabin door where Nanoosa was carrying in wood for the morning fire. She seemed a part of the universal silence about me, for when I accosted her, civilly enough, no audible word of response came from her Even Prudyn was singularly inarticulate during our breakfast in the warm illa-I noticed that the bunks were made up and the place in order. But I began to feel as intrusive as a third person on a wedding-journey. And I wasn't greatly cast down when Nanoosa, with a bundle under her arm, silently departed from our midst.

"Tell me about her," I said to Prudyn, who had sighed and stirred in his chair as

he watched her go.
"There's nothing to tell," was his listless

response.
"But where's she off to?" I insisted. "I imagine she's going out to make medicine," said the refugee as he filled his pipe.
"She's a daughter of Tamma-Noaz, the
medicine-man of the Skittagetans. She's not Chinook or Siwash, as you might think.
And I notice she's taken the old gentleman's
medicine-bag and her precious calumet of
pipestone. That means there'll be something doing in the shaman line, if I'm not mis-

"Doesn't that sort of thing rather worry you?" I asked.

"Nothing ever worries me," he muttered out of his gigantic unconcern.

"But what is she trying to exorcise?" I persisted, painfully conscious of the gulfs between us.

"You," was his brutally frank retort.

I could afford to laugh at that, though
New York, at the moment, seemed an immeasurable distance away from us and our snow-covered illahee.

"Why should she want to get rid of me?" asked.

"Don't you suppose she knows you came to take me back?" he retorted.
"And I'm going to," I proclaimed as I let my glance lock with his. Then, in spite of his cynic smile, I returned to the task that had taken me there. I worked with Prudyn as one works over the half-drowned. I pleaded and argued and even did my best to anger him, struggling to restore to that inert carcass the will to live. He endured my talk, but it made no ponderable im-pression on him. He even got up, in the midst of one of my exhortations, and brought a bundle of softly cured skins, which he held before my face.

"That's Nanoosa's work," he said. "Isn't it wonderful?"

WHEN I renewed the attack, ignoring the barbaric peltries, he just as offhand-edly paraded before me a vest of buckskin, fantastically adorned with beads and dyed porcupine-quills.

"How's that for efficiency?" he abstractedly inquired.

But I turned back to my mission, basing my hope of hope on his earlier cry of pro-

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1523 Raymond Building Dayton, Ohlo, U. S. A. test against my invasion of his squalid Eden. And as I talked, I saw him get slowly up from his chair again and go to a moose-hide bag swung over the second bunk, from which he took out still another bundle of hides. He placed them on the rough table between us

"How about these?" he asked, quite

simply.

I swung an indifferent eye over them. And then I stopped short. For I could see that they were baby-clothes, baby-clothes made out of the softest of fawn-skin, tiny shoes and leggings made of old pea-jacket serge, a slate-gray shirt neatly stitched together from the corner of a worn campblanket, a diminutive cap of rabbit-skin on which a bright brass watch-spring had been

"Great God, you don't mean-

That was as far as I got.
"Why not?" he asked as his combative met mine. "She never gave me that eye met mine. much!"

I wasn't thinking of Daulis Prudyn, at the moment. I was thinking of finalities much closer to hand.

uch closer to hand.
"But a half-breed!" I cried out in my undering horror. "What chance are you blundering horror.

giving him?"

The squaw man stopped short in his deliberate gathering up of the litter of child-clothes. I could see his bony fist clench and his face go tan-color. I thought, for a moment, that he was going to strike me. But he merely moved away, tugging at the throat of his hunting-shirt to loosen it as he went.

"I guess we're all half-breeds," he quietly observed, "if we go far enough back,

My own hand went up to my collar, for I suddenly felt as if the thick, warm air of that cabin were smothering me. But that sense of constriction, I knew, didn't come from starched linen or cloth. It came from an entirely different fabric, woven by Fate. weaves badly because she blindly

Prudyn himself must have shared in that feeling, for he came to a pause in his animal-

like pacing of the rough floor.
"Let's get out of here," he shouted in a sort of rough haste. "There's an extra pair of snowshoes on the wall there. And we can at least buck this storm for an hour or

But it was easier, I remembered as I took the interlaced frames from his great hairy hand, to buck snow than it was to buck biology.

I COULDN'T help wondering, as I floundered through the falling snow after Prudyn, just what it was he was struggling to escape. For he pressed blindly on, like a refugee with bloodhounds at his heels, de-clining to answer me when I spoke to him. When I dropped back, in resentment at his pace and in exasperation at his silence, I found that he forged ahead, indifferent to me and my movements. Yet what most im-pressed me was his solitariness. The lonely figure, leaning forward in that universal grayness, drinking up distance as other men might have drunk up alcohol, took on wordless air of pathos. He made me think of a wounded animal in search of cover, of cover that could not be found.

I had thought, at first, that he was merely trying to lose himself. I even asked myself, for one weak moment, if his movements marked the beginning of a stampede back to civilization. But that attenuated hope vanished when I saw him turn away from the lake and strike deeper into a wooded valley where the pine-branches sagged dolorously under their accumulating crowns of snow, releasing themselves from that weight, now and then, like a shoulder quietly shrugged. I followed him through that lethal stillness, walled in by mountain-tops



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DEPT. 1650 Broadway New York City which I could not see, wondering if it could be the thickness of the ever-falling flakes that still gave me my sense of constriction about the throat.

I was glad to see Prudyn stop, at the crest of a long slope, for my legs ached, and the soft snow showed a tendency to ball under my feet. I noticed him stand there, apparently peering into the gray dis-tance in front of him. Yet he stood with his head slightly averted, like a man in an attitude of listening, of listening to sounds which he could not quite comprehend. Then he moved on again, hesitatingly, and still again came to a stop.

H^E did not speak as I floundered up beside him. He ignored me as he stood there, with his eyes unfocused and his body oddly relaxed, like a man doing his best to hear the unhearable.

And then I understood that I was wrong. For there was indeed sound in that gray smother of quietness. It was a measured and mournful sound, as mournful as the toll and mournful sound, as mournful as the toll of a bell-buoy off a fog-hung shore. It seemed like the beat of a drum, muffled by snow and distance. And as I followed Prudyn, slow step by step, it grew stronger. It became more like the throb of a tom-tom, insistent and querulous, infinitely plaintive. It rose louder, without resonance yet strangely penetrating, as we threaded our way between the umber-toned fir-trunks. It impressed me as ages old and ancestral, like a timeless instrument sounding out of forgotten centuries, like a call across gray gulfs no mind could quite remember.

Prudyn stopped me, his hand on my arm. I leaned close to his snow-crowned shoulder, eyes following his line of vision.

"What is it?" I asked, unable to see through that flake-flurried twilight.
"Shut up!" was his curt command. But

when I looked again, a moment later, I saw and understood

It was Nanoosa. It was the Indian woman, squatted under a tall and ghostlike fir. Before her burned a small fire which sent a single ribbon of smoke coiling up in the snowy air. Between her knees she held a tom-tom, made of a cylinder of wood over which a head of deer-hide had been stretched. Close above her, suspended from the fir by a thong of buckskin, swung a bundle that looked to me like a bundle of clothing. Her expression was rapt as she sat there slowly beating on her tom-tom. What she intoned I could not make out. But the snow accentuated her swarthiness. She looked almost Ethiopian against that blue-white background. She impressed me as so pre-Adamitic and remote that I was prompted to turn to the staring Prudyn, whose hand, I noticed, still rested on my

"Can you go back that far?" I quietly inquired.

A GHOST of a shudder passed through his intent body.
"It's a long way," he admitted in little more than a whisper. He continued to stare at the crow-black head bent over the tom-I, on my part, made no effort to disturb him, since that picture, all things considered, was unexpected grist for my mill. I was thinking of Daulis Prudyn and Dresden china. And I was still on the side of the moderns. What the man beside me was thinking of I had no means of knowing. But I could not escape the conviction that during those brief moments, as he stood there in the falling snow watching the daughter of the shaman Tamma-Noaz making medicine, he had fought his battle and come to his decision. It was he, in fact, who first turned away, tugging at me to follow after him.

"Where are you heading for?" I asked, struck by the resolute look in his eye.

"For home," he said over his shoulder. "Which one?" I demanded.

That brought him up short, as I had ex-There was something akin pected it to do. to anger on his face; yet the bearded lips

were able to laugh down at me, almost derisively. "You haven't much faith in me, have you?" he challenged.

"Can you blame me for that?" I countered.

He stood thinking this over.
"The older I get," he finally asserted, "the less I blame people for anything.

"But what are you going to do?" I persisted, as we moved on again through the thinning light. "I'll tell you that," was his deliberate-

noted answer, "when I meet you at Pig-eye's shack tomorrow." "Where is Pig-eye's shack?" I naturally

inquired.

"It's on Windy Arm, across the lake. I want you to paddle over in one of the canoes and sleep there. Pig-eye's been down the Skeena all summer. His place may be verminous, but you can keep warm there. want to be alone for a while, to think this thing out.

I realized then that I was wrong, that the battle hadn't been fought out to a finish, as I'd imagined. And having traveled so far to have a hand in that battle, I was still averse to standing on the side-lines during

a moment of crisis.
"Well, I hope your better nature wins,"

I found the courage to assert. That pious wish, apparently, awoke no profound sense of gratitude. in my companion. His eye, when he turned about on me, was cold and abstracted.

"Your mediocre little mind can't help me much in this," he had the effrontery to announce.

"It's something, I suppose, between you and your squaw?" was my not unembittered retort

But the shaft, for some reason, fell short. I was conscious only of a tragic sort of desolation in his face as he looked up at the heavens where the falling flakes seemed less smotheringly thick than before.

"The snow's about over," he said with an achieved matter-of-factness as he headed back for his half-buried illahee. "That'll make it easier for mushing out."

PRUDYN, I found, had not been wrong I in his prediction as to the verminous condition of Pig-eye's shack. I avoided the greasy wall-bunk and slept in my blankets on the floor, at a spot where only the thin nest drips from the snow-laden roof could reach me. I had trouble in getting dry wood, and even more trouble in keeping the hovel halfway free of smoke. On the whole, I put in about as wretched a night as I'd ever experienced.

My spirits remained depressed even after daylight had spilled over into the valley. breakfasted on bacon and bannock and tea, and smoked my throat dry and waited for the white man from the upper end of the lake. At noon I cooked myself another meal and smoked without relish and resented the lonely drip of water that punctuated the silence. I thought of the panorama of Fifth Avenue from the crest of Murray Hill. I thought of the Plaza at the tea-hour. thought of the Yale Bowl, alive with color, on a sunny November afternoon. I thought of the brown-backed crescent of armchairs about the open fire of the Players' Club. And as the afternoon deepened, I found myself in the grip of an attack of home-sickness that sharpened into an actual ache. Again and again I looked out over the slategray water, wondering why Prudyn was so

late in coming. I even surrendered to a belated suspicion that he was in some way tricking me, that he was clearing his thresh-



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old of my shadow in his own ironic manner. that he was giving me the laugh as a meddler frying in my own juices of misery.

The afternoon was late before my growing impatience prompted me to action. knew I could wait no longer. So I stepped into the canoe and quartered across the dead gray surface of the lake, coopering together my speeches of indignation as I went.

I began to suspect, as I plodded up from Prudyn's landing, that the illahee was empty, for about it I detected no sign of life, and above it I could see no plume of smoke. The suspicion even flashed over me that they had quietly given me the slip, that while I had marked time that precious pair of lovers had headed deeper into their mountain wilderness, side by side, cutting the last thread between them and their abandoned past.

But I saw, as I swung open the door, that I was wrong in this. For I caught sight of Nanoosa, seated at one end of the table, with her braided head resting on her left

arm, in an attitude of great weariness. I could also make out the great bulk of Prudyn, asleep in his bunk, with his face turned toward the wall.

About that sleeping body was a casual air of relinquishment, of repudiation, that both humiliated and angered me. I strode to his side, prepared to see an empty bottle nesting against his sodden body. When I put a hand on his shoulder and shook him, shook him roughly, he did not answer. It wasn't, indeed, until I turned him half over that I saw the purple, powder-marked hole in the temple. When I fell back against the rough table-edge, I noticed a blackened pool about the moccasined feet of the medicine-man's daughter. I traced it up the stiffened calico skirt and the fringed doeskin waist until I came to the rounded young breast. There I found a hunting-knife sunk in her heart, up to the hilt. And under the fingers of her outstretched left arm I found a diminutive legging, made out of the threadbare cloth of an old pea-jacket.

M A DMARRIAGE

(Continued from page 42)

place where they could discuss the matter in private. But it was difficult to find a quiet place in the midst of five million peo-ple. Upon the street, Peter decided to be diplomatic and persuasive, thus destroying any unpleasant impression that he may have made in ordering Mr. Salazar from Miss Keith's rooms the night before. Salazar lis-tened, rather grim, while they both walked slowly across town. Peter tried with all the eloquence at his command to demonstrate that he had no interest whatever in Josie Brant, who of course still loved only

But Salazar only smiled unpleasantly. He did not say much, but seemed to be listening very intently, now apparently undis-turbed by Peter's presence, since they had reached a neighborhood beyond the horizon Salazar's usual activities. His silence, Peter said, was annoying, his smile supercilious. There were many things about Salazar that Peter did not like. Peter discovered that he had, among other perfec-tions, curling eyelashes. But Peter kept his temper in spite of rapidly growing prejudices. And when at last Salazar broke the silence with an ironic question as to Peter's purpose in walking him so far, at a great loss of valuable time, Peter's patience snapped like a dry stick. He told Salazar frankly that he expected him to marry Josie Brant. Salazar laughed at Peter as he had laughed at Josie, and turned to go back. But Peter caught him by the shoulders and twisted him around, as though he had been a mechanical toy that had been started in a wrong direction.

Then Salazar struck Peter in the eye. They were standing at the mouth of an alley. Peter's rush must have carried them well within it, for nobody, it seemed, at this time had taken any notice of the encounter. And so within the privacy of the alley was the combat waged until Peter, now violently aggressive, struck and struck until Salazar sank in a corner and refused to fight any more. But the mouth of the alley was soon gorged with people who seemed to have sprung like a sowing of dragon's teeth from the earth, armed with righteousness and inquiry. Only one phrase came from the mouth of the breathless Peter when the crowd surrounded him. It happened to be a fortunate phrase: "He insulted a woman." Words of sympathy and opprobrium followed while Salazar awoke to consciousness. And Peter, aware of a diversion in his favor, slipped down the alley before the arrival of the police, caught a taxi on the near-by avenue and made his way to his hotel. was far from a glorious adventure in Peter's

eyes, but it had given him, upon Josie's account, a great deal of quiet satisfaction. Not that it had improved her position in the least, poor girl, and he had not even dared to tell her of the encounter, fearing that her anger might be added to her sor-

row at the failure of his mission.

There were, in the whole sequence of events, elements of Divine justice, and Wingate, not having been sworn to secrecy, considered it a part of his duty to manage that the story should reach Tommy Keith, rather picturesquely, through the lips of his friend Lola, who was now a violent partisan of Peter.

AS may have been already discovered, Formmy Keith belonged to the great army of imperfectly educated females which has taken possession of the world in the hope of changing its too somber music into syncopation. The intellectual resources of Scranton, Pennsylvania, had not been greatly taxed in her education. When Tommy was twelve, her mother had disappeared—no more to be mentioned in the house; Tommy tried to love her memory, and failed dismally. Her father adored his daughter, but only in those few hours that could be spared from the exigencies of his business. So Tommy, like *Topsy*, just "grew."

But she felt that she was too pretty and

too rich to waste her energies in the midland country. And when the war came, she persuaded her father to make his headquarters in New York. He chose the Ritz for his dwelling-place and then died, leaving Tommy with three millions of dollars and a lively disposition, both extremely dangerous assets in a city whose energies are largely engaged in turning assets into liabilities.

Her attitude of mind, when she awoke the morning after Peter's visit, was balanced between astonishment and dismay—astonishment that a man whom she had met but once should come to the hotel and order Jack Salazar from her rooms, still further astonishment that she had accepted so readily the visitor's evidence and explanations, dismay at the sudden destruction of her brazen idol and at the blow to her self-esteem that Peter Randle's revelations had inflicted. Tommy's philosophy, such as it was, revolved around the perfection of all things that were hers-and the duty of those with whom she associated to respect them accordingly. Not much of a philosophy, really, but a very real one to Tommy, who had been led to believe, by the acquiescent and acquisitive world which she moved, that these things were all that should matter to a pretty girl with an

income of a hundred and twenty thousand a year. She had made Jack Salazar a part of these perfections, and she expected from him the sort of adulation and loyalty that she always exacted and received from those who enjoyed her acquaintance.

She could, perhaps, have forgiven him anything but this, for he was very beautiful. The fact that their relation was bound by no laws or promises had made his obligation to her so much the greater. His violent attentions, and her acceptance of them, were tacit admissions of that obligation. The bare facts were these: She had been beguiled, fooled, deceived for a common ticket-seller at the Undine—and all this had happened during the winter while Jack Salazar had been winning past the boundaries that she had marked for him! There was her humiliation and her shame. She remembered rather dizzily how near she had been once or twice to complete forgetfulness. Fool that she was! In the eyes of Peter Randle almost as much of a fool as Josie Brant, the ticket-seller, herself. For he had said so.

She got out of bed slowly, aware that some sort of a crisis had come to her affairs. A physical crisis, which involved the tendencies of her body—a spiritual crisis that involved the habits of her mind.

It was the same world, of course. There was still her money, typified by the extravagances and luxuries of her dressing-room. There was still the sun in the usual pink lozenge on the old-rose couch by the window, and there was still Lucette holding her silk dressing-gown and ready to prepare her for the bath. But something was changed in it all. The old flavor was out of it. The sunlight was unfriendly, and her mirror refused to flatter—a kindly mirror after nightfall. She seemed to see with a prophetic vision exactly what she would look like at forty. Forty! And she was only twenty-six!

But her bath revived her, and in her kimono she dared to look again into the mirror. Reassured, she smiled experimentally, and with success. She had been a fool, of course—a fool about a man because he had been good to look at. It was strange that she could ever have thought that beauty was all that she required of Jack Salazar or of any man. This morning she remembered that he had been far from beautiful as he faced the wrath of her visitor, Mr. Peter Randle.

It was very curious and very astonishing how, from anger at the insults of this Peter Randle, she could have been turned, by a phrase, into his violent partisan—curious that she should have listened with satisfaction and approval as Peter Randle had ordered Jack Salazar from the room. Randle had entered her apartment as a casual and unconventional visitor from whom she might gain some amusement. He had left it still unconventional but no longer casual. At a stride he had achieved the dignity of an avenging Fate. There were, she began to think, elements of the miraculous in his intervention in her affairs. For she had been in a frame of mind that threatened danger.

HER ideas as to Peter were, however, mingled with wonder. On the night at Jimmy Blake's she had thought of him as a large and rather perplexed St. Bernard, torn between the impulses to bark and to wag his tail. This morning he seemed more like an amiable fireman who had appeared suddenly outside her window on a ladder and awkwardly rescued her from the flames. There was something apt rather than merely amusing in the picture. The flames were fortunately extinguished and the damage not beyond repair, but it was rather astonishing to discover that it had required the appearance of the fireman to make her aware that her house was on fire. She no longer

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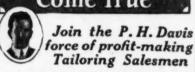
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thought of Peter Randle as merely amusing. He was now less a personality than a prodigious fact that had been thrust upon her, saving her in spite of herself from a great folly. But for the present she had no desire to see Peter Randle, for he had been the witness of her humiliation.

AFTER many chilling evasions spring had actually come, for the forsythia and red-gum trees were already proclaiming it in the Park. Tommy had bought a new runabout, a red two-passenger affair, low and of great length and swiftness, and in this vehicle she frequently drove forth into the country. Her companion this morning was Lola Oliver, and their destination no-where in particular, which meant usually a late luncheon in Westchester or on Long Island, and a speedy, exhilarating drive homeward in the late afternoon. Several weeks had passed since the dismissal of Jack Salazar, and Tommy had already decided that she had forgotten him. He had called again and again, and she had refused to see him. He had written her, impassioned notes, rather badly spelled, and she had paid no attention to them. They had met at Jimmy Blake's, and she had turned her back upon him.

The new car attracted much attention, especially from the traffic policemen; but Tommy, aided by the experience of frequent fines, had learned to gauge by a hair's-breadth the limits of their endurance and the persuasive possibilities of her smile. Be-yond the city, they moved rapidly and were soon in a region of farm-lands.

Her speed mania gratified for the moment, Tommy relaxed and listened to Lola's gos-Tommy had at first been disposed to be resentful of the liberty Lola had taken in sending Peter Randle to her apartment. But Lola had only laughed at her. And when Tommy learned how much Lola really knew about everything, she decided that she could not afford to be on anything but good terms with this friend, who after all, though intrusive, had had Tommy's best interests at heart. At the moment, too, she needed Lola's keen viewpoint on life, which helped her to put her own affairs into their But Frederick Wingate proper perspective. had added something to Lola's information as to Peter Randle, and Tommy's companion was charged, like a soda fountain, with delectable flavors.

Lola had a fine sense for dramatic effect, but her forte was ironic comedy, and the story of Peter Randle's pursuit of Jack Salazar and their subsequent combat afforded her art of narration an unusual opportunity. This was part of her revenge upon Tommy for her reticence in replying to Lola's ques-tions about Peter Randle's visit. She began with the meeting with Peter Randle at the hotel, and his damaged appearance as the result of an unusual encounter with the door of a taxicab. Then with are allowed she described what had actually happened and why Peter, his mission a failure, had suddenly departed for Red Bridge. She knew that the most formidable enemy of passion is ridicule, and she painted in details that glowed with color, the picture of the unfortunate Salazar, despoiler of women, rescued from his ash-heap in the alley and the anathema of the scornful crowd.

Tommy listened in silence, preoccupied with the driving-wheel. But when Lola had finished talking, she laughed. Lola was satisfied with that laugh, for it had a careless ring. Then for a while Tommy kept her toe on the accelerator, and in the rush of wind there was no opportunity for conversation or even for thought. But at last, as they came to a village, with a series of staccato back-fire salutes, the pace became slower. Tommy grinned and spoke:

"Well, it's funny, Lola, how things hap-pen in this world. I was so crazy about

myself that it never entered my head that Jack Salazar couldn't be just as crazy as I was. It was about time I woke up. Oh, I'm awake, all right. And I guess I owe that to you.

"Oh, I don't mind taking the credit. But then, you can't afford to forget Peter Ran-

dle."
"That man!" said Tommy with another laugh. "I can't forget him. I wish I laugh. "I can't forget nim. a war could. It's not pleasant to think about any man who believes you to be a poor, weak, silly fool. That's what Peter Randle thinks I am.

"Was, my dear," Lola corrected.
"But I like him, Lola. Queer, isn't it?
To want the good opinion of a freak like I guess it's just because he's the only that! one but you who guessed how big a fool I was." She paused a moment and then asked: "Did Wingate say anything about what happened when he got back home?"

"No-nothing." "What sort of a creature is this Josie Brant?"

Lola replied only with a shrug.

"Well, Fred Wingate must have said some-

thing about her."
"He did. She's playing the game. place to go but out. So she's learning to make cinnamon buns."

"Cinnamon buns-why?"

"Because as near as I can make out, they're Peter Randle's staple article of diet." Tommy turned and then looked down the winding ribbon of road. "Yes," she said "Peter Randle would like cinnamon

"Queer taste, I'd say, but the idea does make you hungry somehow." Lola glanced at her wrist-watch.

"Let's eat, Tommy. Do you know it's after two?"

THEY found a tea-house at the next village, where they got out and had lunch. Over the cigarettes there was another moment of confidences.

"What do you really think, Lola," asked Tommy, "about Peter Randle and this Brant woman? Living in the same house, I mean -away off in the country. You know, Jack Salazar said that Peter Randle was You know, trying to get him to marry the girl that he wouldn't have to. You don't so that he wouldn't have to. believe that, do you?"

Lola's smile was not the cynical one she employed for most of the gossip that she There was real amusement in it.

"What would you think?"
"I-I don't know," said Tommy

Lola moved her hand with an air of con-ction. "Well, you know, I'm not in the viction. habit of throwing any bouquets at the menfolks, when it comes to that. But it's my little guess that this bird Peter Randle doesn't know that there's anybody unusual around He's a-er-idealist-and that the house. means not having any ideas that haven't got wings on em. I actually believe that if a girl held his hand for fifteen minutes, he'd think he was having a European honeymoon."

"No, I don't believe that. I held his hand for a minute, and he didn't even know I was there.

"Well, you were not an object for sentiment—just charity—just a poor little rich girl with more money than brains."

That's a little too true to be funny," said Tommy reflectively.

Lola bent forward and laid her hand im-

pulsively over Tommy's.
"You've got brains. If you hadn't, even
I wouldn't make a joke of it. I guess you'll do, Tommy."

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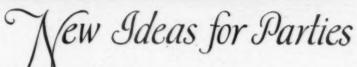
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